MODERN ABYSSINIA

AUGUSTUS B. WYLDE

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KING MENELEK

MODERN ABYSSINIA

BY

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AUTHOR OF "'83 TO '87 IN THE SOUDAN"

WITH FRONTISPIECE AND A MAP

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MODERN ABYSSINIA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE attention, not only of England, but that of the whole English-speaking race, as well as most of the continental Powers, has been so repeatedly drawn during the last few years to Abyssinia and its present ruler King Menelek, that I have been asked by many people, both friends and comparative strangers, to publish what I know about the country. In the following pages I hope to be able to contribute some little information about the inhabitants and their customs, and what they have done during modern times which may prove interesting, as the time is not far distant when more stirring events may be looked forward to in the north-eastern portion of Africa in which Abyssinia must take an important part, and there can be no doubt that the people of this country must eventually, either by peaceful or warlike means, take their place in the new era of civilisation now happily commencing to dawn over a land too long neglected and misunderstood by those that have its future in their keeping.

I apologise to my readers by commencing with a little bit of personality in introducing myself to them, and how it was I left England and took to a roving life. Being brought up from childhood with the intention of following a military career, one of my family having been on the army list since very early in the eighteenth century, it was a great blow to me, after working hard to pass my examination for Woolwich, to be told that I was medically unfit for the army and could never ride or stand a tropical climate. The decision of the doctors has been my life's disappointment. I never believed them, and what I have gone through certainly proves that their opinion was a wrong one; it also gave me a distrust for official opinions, and that they are far from infallible; and I have found during the many years that I have travelled, how often those that give decisions and direct England's

policy have been in the wrong, and what an immense amount of unnecessary misery they have caused.

Immediately after my being plucked medically I determined to go to the East, and as I could not "soldier," to do perhaps equally exciting work pioneering and collecting facts and information on countries that the public knew little or nothing about. A.D. 1870 saw me prepared to start for Ceylon to get a general knowledge of a tropical and commercial life, and to study the form of government there, which to me seemed the best that existed amongst the Crown Colonies, where several millions of inhabitants are kept in order by a very small force. Before leaving for the East I had already studied every available book I could procure on sport and travelling in India and Africa, and was full of the literature of the recent campaign (1867-8) to Abyssinia under the late Lord Napier of Magdala. In 1874 I was back at Aden on my way home after having enjoyed plenty of sport in Ceylon and knowing a good deal about jungle life, which is the best school to learn in, and I started again before the close of the year for the then very little known town of Jeddah, the seaport of Mecca, and the then emporium for the majority of the trade, legitimate and illegitimate, of Abyssinia and the Soudan; the merchants of Suakim and Massowah being then only forwarding and receiving agents for the large native mercantile houses in Jeddah, who were all engaged in the Slave Trade with Cairo, Constantinople, and other centres of Mahomedan depravity. From that date up to the present day I have more or less been associated with the Soudan and Abyssinia, and have never for one moment let my interest flag in these very fascinating and nearly unknown Mahomedan and Christian countries. Fascinating they are there can be no doubt, in spite of their discomforts and drawbacks, such as climate and want of civilisation, as one seems to be irresistibly drawn back to visit the scenes of one's former wanderings, with the free and open air life that is led, and the old and now hackneyed Arab saying, that I heard years ago, of "he that has once drank of the waters of the Nile will return," seems true both for European and Arab. It has a still stronger spell for me, having not only tasted the dirty and polluted water of the combined Niles, but drank from the streams of the White Nile, Blue Nile and Black Nile (Atbara), and watched the sources of the two latter rivers coming out from the rocks and springs that give them birth in

the lovely mountainous scenery of Central and Eastern Abyssinia.

Many of the happiest days of my life have been spent in the uplands of Abyssinia, enjoying the ever varying scenery of mountain, valley and plain, looking at the lovely flowers, plants and trees, the birds with their gorgeous plumage, the animals and the butterflies, moths and insects, many of them being unknown in other countries. No day ever seemed to be too long, and I know of no country that would repay the botanist, naturalist, geologist or artist better, than a year passed collecting and studying the varied objects to be met with.

The seasons in Abyssinia are more marked than in many other parts of the world, and immediately after the rains commence there is a change from the dull browns, greys and reds of the forest, field and fell, to vivid and tender greens of all shades, and this sudden alteration in the colours of the landscape is more marked in the provinces of Tigré and Amhara in the north and centre, than in the open wind-swept downs of Shoa in the southern portion of the kingdom. I have seen the country at all times of the year: during the rainy season and the dry, after the summer and winter rains, while the ground is being broken up and the seed planted, and at harvest time when the crops are being gathered; also during the time of peace and prosperity, with the busy villages and contented inhabitants, during war, famine and pestilence; and then still at another time, when kind nature in one short season has hidden man's hideous handiwork and covered the ruins of the hamlets and their unburied occupants with a thick growth of vegetation.

There is no harder worker than the Abyssinian peasant, and no more harmless and hospitable person when left alone and properly treated; and no more truculent, worthless, conceited, lazy and useless individual than the Abyssinian soldier, who formerly did nothing but prey upon the defenceless cultivator.

Circumstances are now altering all this, as will be mentioned later on, and before the country settles down to modern civilisation and it makes any great strides forward, a civil revolution must take place, and which may not be far distant. There are all the elements now ready in the country to make this uprising and it will be no doubt the great turning point in its history, and whether Abyssinia is to remain a despotic monarchy or to enjoy the freedom of a

better and more enlightened rule. At present there is on the one side, an absolute despotic monarchy which does little or no good for its subjects, who have no voice in either the government or the taxation.

The monarchy is upheld by what may be called feudal barons, mostly, but with of course some exceptions, an uneducated and dissolute set, and the monarch and his barons are kept in power by an unpaid soldiery who live on the country, more or less, and take what they want from the population. Then there is the clerical party, consisting of the priests, monks and nuns, who may be called the connecting link between the higher and lower classes, and who play an important part in the daily life of the inhabitants; and lastly, on the other side, the small landowner and the peasant proprietor, the artisan and the merchant. It is the latter that has had, and has now, more to do with the opening up of Abyssinia than anyone else, and wherever the merchant trades along the main and country roads of the kingdom, there will be found a welcome to the stranger who visits the country with a peaceful intent, as the merchant from whom the countryman gets the most of his news of the outside world, has told him that the foreigner does no harm in his country and welcomes and protects the traveller and stranger. I have been well received everywhere, when I have travelled without an escort, and instead of finding the Abyssinian countryman reticent and shy, have found him entirely the reverse and glad to impart and seek information on many subjects.

Ever since the 1867-8 expedition to Magdala, the inhabitants of the country have been learning daily, one may say, more about the outside world. The impression left on them by the English was an excellent one, and we are at this moment remembered with gratitude in the north by noble, priest, and peasant who still survive. Tradition has passed our merits down to a younger generation in glowing colours, and we are counted as being a people whose word is as good as their bond, and who helped them in their time of need and got rid of a ruler who, although in the early part of his life was kind and considerate towards them, changed at last, as many other Abyssinian rulers have before him, into one of the greatest tyrants of modern history, and was at last feared and detested. It was only the organisation of King Theodore's force, and his fire-arms, that kept down the peasantry, and his rapidity of movement allowed him to

outnumber his enemies in detail; and also from what might be called their want of information of what was going on in the other parts of the country, owing to the insecurity of the roads, which prevented them from acting in concert. This has now been changed; the roads are safer, there is more communication, and therefore news travels quicker. The peasant is no longer miserably armed with spear and shield, or sword and shield, but is generally the owner of a fairly modern breech-loading rifle, and has a good store of cartridges, and can always procure more on next local market day, where they are openly sold or bartered and count as coin.

Abyssinia has made great progress since the latter end of 1883 and the commencement of 1884; that is, from the time the Egyptians ceased to hold the seaport towns. As long as the late General Gordon was Governor-General of the Soudan trade was allowed with Abyssinia, but the moment his back was turned, frontier aggressions took place and the country in the north was unsafe except for Europeans. I found this state of affairs in 1883, when sent there by the late Baker Pasha and Admiral Sir William Hewett.

Abyssinian merchants travel more than they did formerly, opportunities for communicating with the north and east being more frequent, and at a great deal cheaper rate. When I first remember Massowah it was visited at rare intervals; there was supposed to be a monthly mail, but owing to quarantine and other restrictions the steamers did not run regularly, and for months the port was without any boat except an Egyptian man-of-war or some passing foreign low-powered cruiser seeking to replenish her supply of coal so as to enable her to steam up against the head winds that blow down the Red Sea for so many months in the year. The merchants then had to make use of the native sailing craft to get over to Jeddah, Hodeidah or Aden, and wait there for some length of time, as in those days opportunities for getting east or west were not as they are now. In olden days it took these merchants all their time to turn their money over once in a season, and owing to the insecurity of the roads, some seasons no venture could be undertaken; and when they did make their way to the coast, many merchants and their servants had for safety to travel together, and were very often accompanied by priests and others on their way to perform their pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

This is all changed; the merchants now travel singly with their servants; they can find an immediate market for their

produce from the Europeans settled on the coast; and if they consider the price offered a bad one, they have only to wait a few days for a steamer to Egypt, Aden or India, where they get a better price for their goods and a more varied and cheaper market to purchase in for their return produce. This trade is not confined to the men alone, as there are a good many females who take up trading as a business and own numbers of houses and a good deal of land in Abyssinia. There is now hardly a seaport town from India to Constantinople that has not its small Abyssinian colony, and there is a regular and frequent communication kept up with their homes. No wonder then that the Abyssinian merchant is so far ahead of his other countrymen in intelligence; he has seen security of life and property in other countries, and that the profession of a merchant is, instead of being looked down upon as in his country, held in the greatest of esteem; that the life of the majority of the people he has met abroad is employed in buying and selling; and of course when he returns he gets discontented with the officials of his country who do nothing to help him. He has first to pay the King's dues, bribe the Custom House officer, and give something to every feudal baron through whose governorate he has to pass.

I have always made it a rule to converse a great deal with the Abyssinian merchant, who always knows Arabic, and having mixed with the outside world, he is not conceited and bigoted, and a much better idea of the country can be got from him, and what is wanted to improve it, than from the Abyssinian officials, who have always moved in one narrow groove. The latter are suspicious and reticent at first, and are always afraid of making friends of strangers on account of their being surrounded by spies, who report everything to headquarters, where there are many people only too glad to succeed to any post, and do not mind what tales they spread and what they say so that they can gain their ends. The upper classes as a rule are not nearly so well-informed as the lower trading population, and they live in an air of what may be called intrigue and distrust, with little or nothing to do and plenty of time to do it in. A hard day's manual labour is beneath them, and they have no outdoor games or amusements wherewith to occupy their spare time. They are hangers-on at Court, wasting their days round the doors of the King's palaces or at some prince's or ruler of a province, and passing away their daytime

in eating, drinking and sleeping. Their only chance of employment is if war breaks out, or they are sent on an expedition to annex further territory or punish some border tribe. The loot they take brings their pay, and when on an expedition they even plunder the peaceful inhabitants of the country that they pass through.

The whole condition of Abyssinia is more what England used to be in the worst of the feudal days, and as long as it was surrounded by Mahomedans who were either under the government of Turkey or Egypt, the peasant and the baron worked together against the common enemy to repel invasions, as the Turkish or Egyptian officials were always getting up raids to plunder or to procure slaves, for which the highlander retaliated, and a warfare used to take place not unlike the Border life in Cumberland and Northumberland on one side and in the southern Scottish counties on the other. As long as there was a cause why these two elements should work together the peasant put up with the exactions of the barons, but there have been several short periods since the English expedition, when, although not nearly so well armed as they are now, the peasant has defended himself against these illegal extortions, and worsted the barons and their soldiers in fair fight.

It will be interesting to watch the future of the country; as long as the chief ruler or King of Kings was a fair and just man like the late King Johannes, he managed to hold the scales of justice with a firm and even hand, despite King Menelek's rebellion and being attacked first by Egypt and then by the Italians and the Dervishes. These campaigns were a great drain on the resources of the country, but the inhabitants undertook them cheerfully as they were all working from the King downwards to protect their homes and religion from a common danger.

Conditions now are greatly altered; the Egyptian has been removed from the frontier and has not now to be reckoned with, and his corrupt government has given place, we hope, to a fair and honest one supervised by Englishmen.

The dervish, the great source of annoyance to all, and whom it was impossible to live with or along side of, is a thing of the past as far as Abyssinia is concerned. Italy has entirely altered her policy, and the change from a military to a civilian government has already had the most beneficial result; and instead of the native population deserting her territory as they did formerly, they are returning with more of their

friends and settling down, where they can enjoy the benefits of security and the blessings of law and order which Italy now gives them. Somaliland is under the joint protection of England and Italy, with the exception of one tribe, that of the Black Esa Somalis (a mixture of Esa and Danakil), who are nominally under French protection, but who resent it on every available opportunity. Abyssinia now seems to have no enemy on her frontier, and as soon as the peasant understands this, he will no doubt resent any further exactions from the barons and their soldiery and refuse to pay any taxes but those of the King. It will then become a question of King and peasant against the barons, or barons and King against the peasantry, with perhaps the clerical party sympathising and siding with the latter.

From some oversight on the part of England giving up territory on the south-east borders of Abyssinia in the Somaliland, and by the Italian Government not having their Somali Hinterland defined, there is a great chance of difficulties arising on the south and south-eastern borders of Abyssinia. Events now progress so quickly in Africa that a dispute may arise sooner than is anticipated, and it is to be hoped that both England and Italy will work together to prevent these rich grazing and agricultural districts with their Mahomedan population from passing out of the sphere of European influence into that of Abyssinia. If these countries are not retained, civilisation and commerce in them may be indefinitely postponed, as Abyssinia will not be able to do justice to a country populated by people of the Mahomedan religion or tendencies towards this faith. The Africans' first step in the social scale has so far been through the Mahomedan religion and not through Christianity, and the doubtful blessings of the general and wholesale baptism of the Galla tribes by the Abyssinians to their form of worship has not been nor is likely to be a success.

The feud between the Christian and Mahomedan is of long standing in this country and it is quite likely that history may again repeat itself, and it is only because the former are better armed that they keep the more numerous and industrious Mahomedans in a semi state of slavery. It must not be forgotten that the Mahomedans of Africa prefer the English rule to any other on account of our being less uncharitable towards their religion ; they make excellent fighting material, and if ever armed and advised by Englishmen they would be quite a match for the Abyssinians, and in them we

have a cheap power that can be turned to our advantage if kept under our rule, but if given over to Abyssinia these same people may be used against us.

The final settlement of the southern portion of the Abyssinian kingdom will leave King Menelek face to face with the question of what he will have to do with his fighting feudal barons and his large army, as he will have no enemies to conquer and his neighbours will be either under English, Italian or French protection. The military may settle down and turn their arms into reaping hooks and ploughshares, but most likely civil war will break out on the demise of the present king, and circumstances may arise whereby Abyssinia's neighbours may have to interfere. With regard to England and Italy, there are no signs as yet that this is likely, but with France it is more probable, considering the way she treats her native population and the means she employs to get a foothold in a country; in another chapter I have entered into this question more fully, and given a description of the condition of things between Abyssinia and her European neighbours.

The regeneration of Abyssinia and its commencing to be a help to the civilisation of north-east Africa dates from the complete overthrow of the Dervishes, a task already finished, thanks to the able manner Sir Francis Wingate and the officers with him managed the last campaign and acted at once without waiting for re-inforcements, knowing very well from his many years experience that the troops with him were more than sufficient, and that a fly can be squashed without a steam hammer, and also that the Dervishes never required the elaborate preparations that had formerly been made for their overthrow. The Soudan school for fighting lessons has been a bad one in many ways, and the many years our men have only had to walk out in the open and the Dervishes would come with their spears and swords to be killed gave them little experience of what real warfare really is against a mobile foe perhaps equally well armed, such as the Abyssinian would be.

With the overthrow of the Dervishes and the death of the Khalifa and his principal Baggara leaders, the Soudan should commence to quiet down, and the riverain population are now free from attack, and both banks of the Nile can be cultivated, which was impossible while the Khalifa was alive, as the frontier extended from Dongola to Fashoda, and was always liable to sudden raids from a Dervish mounted force

on the west bank of the river. There still however remains a great deal to be done before Kordofan and Darfur become as safe to travel over as the roads in the eastern portion of the Soudan; and it must not be forgotten that the disturbances in the country were not due to Mahdism alone so much as to the wicked and corrupt governing of the Egyptian officials after the comparatively mild and good rule that the inhabitants enjoyed under the late lamented General Gordon during the whole time he was Governor-General of the Soudan.

I can remember on my visit to him at Khartoum, while he was the Governor-General, that the banks of the Nile were inhabited by a large population of happy and contented cultivators, who worked hard at their water-wheels and were yearly increasing the acreage of cultivated land; but the moment he left the country, increased taxation was put upon these people, so much so that it did not pay them any longer to continue their labours, and they joined the general rising to get rid of their hated rulers, only to fall under the more blighting and wretched bondage of the Baggaras. The English newspapers keep no correspondents in the Soudan or Abyssinia, and with the exception of a Reuter's telegram occasionally from some official who is acting for them, the English-speaking public all over the world do not know what is being done in the Soudan or Abyssinia, so they cannot form any independent opinion on what is going on there, nor will they be able to follow, except through Blue Book literature, the peaceful developments of commerce that must now take place to settle the inhabitants of the country and give them something to do so that they may keep quiet and gain a livelihood.

The most likely cause of future disturbances will, as it was in former times, be the slave dealers under their acknowledged chief and leader Osman Digna,* who from all accounts had made his way to the Eastern Soudan *en route* to Arabia to consult with his friends at Jeddah and Mecca, and to obtain their aid so as to enable further operations to be carried on. The slave dealers can never be expected to raise such a formidable force as that of the Mahdi or the Khalifa, but still they will be able to keep part of the country in such a disturbed state that together with Abyssinia, should

* Since writing this, Osman Digna has been captured. The slave dealers will, however, still carry on their trade under some other chief, for as long as there is a demand there will be a supply, and until some few of the slave traders are executed they will be just as busy as ever.

she prove hostile or unwilling to stop the road through her territory, it will be many years before they are finally put down.

There are two big roads by which the Soudan can be reached and where the slave dealers can enjoy perfect immunity: one is *via* Tripoli through Turkish territory and where there is always a market for slaves, and where the dealers can always obtain supplies of arms and ammunition and keep Wadai and Darfur in a disturbed state; and the second is through the French sphere of influence near Djibuti, and then through Abyssinia to the western feeders of the Nile, the district that has always been, with the exception of the time when Lupton Bey was Governor, the chief seat of the Slave Trade in the Soudan. As long as there is a demand for slaves there will always be a supply, and through these roads the trade will be carried on without let or hindrance; and we cannot expect either Turkey or France to put a stop to it, as the Turkish subjects are the great purchasers that cause the demand, and the French will neither put it down themselves, as they cannot get labourers in their colonies; nor do they allow the right of search under their flag, which serves to cover the slaves in the middle passage.

Luckily for England, Mahdism can now be reckoned as a thing of the past, and it simplifies a great deal our future dealings with King Menelek; it is to be hoped also that Krugerism will shortly be finished, as we can then take a much stronger and firmer position with regard to Abyssinia, that may become the third "ism" that will delay the peace of Africa. Menelekism may give a great deal of trouble in the future, and will always more or less be a constant source of anxiety to those that have anything to do with the country; as we can never be sure of a ruler who has passed his life in one constant intrigue to gain the throne of Abyssinia, and can now wield if he chooses its undoubted great power to the detriment of his neighbours and to keep this part of Africa in a constant state of unrest, thus preventing its peaceful development by commercial enterprise.

I have no hesitation in saying that, from my many years' experience of all classes of Abyssinians, very few of them have any wish further than to lead a quiet life and to be left alone in their own country, accepting a higher state of civilisation that years of peace and contact with the outer world can only give them; the chief reason hitherto of their dislike to foreigners has been caused by the priests, who have had ample

justification to regard all strangers with suspicion, as they have mostly been missionaries who have tried to alter the religion of the country, which is neither that of the Greek and Russian Church nor that of the Coptic Church of Egypt, but nearer to the latter than any other. The Abyssinian religion has its faults the same as all have, but it is most interesting in its present form and one that perhaps has changed less than any other, and why people should wish to interfere with it I never could understand. If the priests in Abyssinia are left alone I do not think they would mind who their rulers were, as long as they gave them good and just government, and the peasant and pedlar are of the same way of thinking.

It may seem out of place mentioning as I do so much about the Soudan when the subject treated is Abyssinia, but these two countries have for centuries been intimately associated with one another, and the history of one is not complete without the history of the other; this has been so in the past and in the future it must be a great deal more so. The position of Abyssinia in Africa is not that of a buffer state like Afghanistan in Asia, dividing the two great European Asiatic powers, England and Russia, and which might at any time be the scene of the most terrible struggle that this continent has ever witnessed; but the two countries, Afghanistan and Abyssinia, have many points in common. In Asia four powers meet, Russia, Persia, Afghanistan and England, and it may be that the former will be opposed to the two latter over the question of the succession, and everything depends on the life of one man, the present ruler. In Africa it is also a question of four powers, Italy, England, France and Abyssinia, being brought into contact with one another, and complications are certain to be brought about over who succeeds to the throne at King Menelek's death. Life and its duration is always an uncertainty, and perhaps more so in a country like Abyssinia where violent deaths are most common, and so few of the rulers have died in their beds, so at any moment the three European powers interested may be brought face to face with a problem that will take some solving.

There will be pretenders to the throne, and it is doubtful whether the northern part of Abyssinia will again care to be ruled by a prince of the south; had there been a stronger and more popular man than Ras Mangesha the result might have been different. It is against the policy of England

and Italy to allow a ruler unfriendly to them and to their Mahomedan subjects to occupy the throne, and as Abyssinia is entirely a self-supporting country and its rulers want nothing from Europeans except arms and ammunition that they can procure through Djibuti, it would not be a difficult matter for France to send sufficient quantities into the country to last for many years, then run their own candidate who might be unfriendly to others and a tool in her hands, and be virtually masters of the situation and cause both Italy and England enormous expense in keeping frontier garrisons for the defence of their African possessions and prevent their peaceful development.

An unfriendly Abyssinia, or in the hands of France, would always be a serious menace to the telegraph and railway that is to be made from Egypt to the Cape, and I do not see how England or Italy, unless they come to some friendly understanding with Abyssinia, can ever be safe in their lands bordering this country. The future of Abyssinia is shrouded in mystery, and it is to be hoped that the influence of those who wish to see her true welfare will be so strong that a peaceful settlement of the question will be arrived at in the most speedy manner possible. Will the three European powers who are interested come to a friendly understanding, is the great question. I am afraid they will not, as France, with the Abyssinian stick in her hand, has an instrument that she can beat both Italy and England with, and can make it very unpleasant for both of them in Africa.

CHAPTER II

ABYSSINIAN HISTORY

IT is impossible in a volume of this dimension to enter fully into the history of Abyssinia so as to do it justice, and there are not enough details as yet available, either in England or on the Continent, to piece together a narrative that would fulfil and embrace all the vicissitudes through which this country has passed. What Abyssinia may produce hereafter when it is thoroughly explored, can only be a matter of conjecture, but no doubt when the ruins of the ancient cities are systematically examined, and the inscriptions properly deciphered, a great deal of evidence will be accumulated regarding its ancient history, and many details now wanting will be found amongst the old writings and documents that still exist in the monasteries on the fortified Ambas, or small table mountains, that are so frequently met with in the provinces of Tigré and Amhara.

Abyssinian history and that of Egypt have no doubt been intimately associated from the earliest times, and as in the past, when a tedious voyage separated the two countries, so it will be in the future, when quicker communications are arranged, and the Soudan becomes more developed. The journey to the borders of Abyssinia from Cairo will then be counted only in hours. Formerly it was reckoned in months, and in more modern times in weeks, and at present in days.

There can be little doubt that Abyssinia formed part of a great southern nation that was contemporary with the earliest Jewish times; and in the reign of King Solomon, when the Queen of Sheba visited this monarch in Syria, it had already reached to a high scale of civilisation. It is nearly certain that this southern nation of Sheba extended to both sides of the Red Sea, embracing the Arab countries of Yemen and Hadramut, and including the island of Socotra. Its limits in Africa are only a matter of conjecture, but most likely included all the ground where coffee and khat are cultivated, which would embrace in the south-west the

whole of the western Galla country. In this part of the world these two plants are only found in Abyssinia, Yemen and the Hadramut, and the khat is only eaten by the inhabitants of these places. This is a bit of evidence that I think tends to show that the people who inhabit these countries were formerly connected, and also the fact that Jews of the same type of feature and mode of doing the hair to this day live in both countries, and have kept their religion in spite of the comparatively peaceful third century wave of Christianity and the conquering fifteenth century wave of Mahomedanism.

It is not denied by any historian that trade ceased to exist between the lands that border the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and the Far East. We know that Adulis, near Zullah, the landing place of the English expedition, was once a very important commercial town on the trade route to the East, and therefore there is no reason to doubt that the Jews, who have always been keen traders, inhabited this country from the earliest of times, and until the present time the inhabitants of Abyssinia, Christian and Mahomedan have still many customs the same as the Jews. This tends perhaps to fix the history of the country at our earliest biblical times, and that it was inhabited by a race far superior to any of negro origin. Certainly ancient civilisation and circumcision went together both in Asia and Africa, and the present inhabitants of Abyssinia, Jew, Abyssinian Christian, and Mahomedan all practise this rite.

The nearest negro race to Abyssinia are the Shangalla, who inhabit the country bordering the Blue Nile in latitude 10° to 12° north, and longitude 34° to 36° east. This tribe is the most eastern of all the negroes in this part of Africa, and they are totally different in habits and customs to the inhabitants of the highlands, and they do not practise the rite of circumcision.

To the west of the Shangallas are the Shillooks and Denkas, also negroes. The Baze tribe, that live on the north-west borders of Abyssinia on the watershed of the Gash and Settite rivers, are not negroes but negroid and also do not circumcise, and if they were the original inhabitants of Abyssinia as some people think, they have greatly fallen in the social scale, and their fall must have dated long before the Ptolemaic era.

If tradition is correct, the Queen of Sheba's visit to King Solomon at Jerusalem took place about 1000 years before

the coming of Christ, and the present King Menelek of Abyssinia claims his descent from that Queen's son, Menelek, whose father was supposed to be King Solomon. This makes this supposed line of descent about 3000 years, and perhaps goes to confirm that at the time of the Queen's visit the country of Sheba extended to both sides of the sea; but what strikes one as curious is, that the present ruler can trace his descent to that date, an object of minor importance, but what would be more interesting for all of us to know, is that he cannot say where his country extended to, and that he is entirely ignorant of the fact that Sheba was in Arabia and not in Africa.

From all the present data that is available, it will be found that it is impossible to determine who were the original inhabitants of Abyssinia. The present race, as the name Habesh or Abyssinian denotes, is a mixture undoubtedly of very long standing, but most likely of Jew, with the inhabitants of southern Arabia and the non-negro races of eastern Africa. At present there are many Abyssinians that show a negro type, but this can be accounted for by either the father's or mother's ancestors belonging to that race, or more recently by an Abyssinian having obtained an illegitimate child from some negro woman. Colour may arise from many reasons, namely altitude above the sea. The lighter ones coming from a climate like in northern India, and the darker from the tropical valleys, where the heat and moisture are intense, or the burning lower plains where the thermometer seldom ranges under 100° Fahrenheit in the sun. To study the whole documentary evidence regarding Abyssinia necessitates reading everything that the British and other Museums possess on the subject; and by spending perhaps a year over this work, a very good idea could be formed of what the country used to be, but not what it is now.

When the archæologist has full run of Abyssinia and southern Arabia and the ruins of the ancient cities are explored, then something interesting will be found, which will tell us more about the ancient history of perhaps Sheba and Abyssinia; but until excavations take place, so long will the hidden inscriptions and treasures remain underground. Not a rainy season passes unless some coins of the old Axumite Dynasty are washed out of the ground, but how long this Dynasty existed is hard to say. Up till the present moment no one has been able to do justice to the

subject, owing to the meagre details to work on. On my last visit to Axum I obtained several coins; unfortunately I parted with some of the specimens before showing them to the authorities at the British Museum, and from the very limited collection they possess, they believe it is useless trying to come to any decision on the subject until many more specimens are obtained. The monuments at Axum and its neighbourhood were made by a race that were expert engineers, quarrymen and workers in stone, who might have lived about the same period as the ancient Egyptians, say something over 3000 years ago; a few centuries more or less is at present quite near enough when dealing with the ancient history of Abyssinia, while in Egypt, with the data and the inscriptions found, an approximate time to within a century can be given to everything.

The connecting link between Egyptian and Abyssinian history will be found, I am certain, in the island of Meroe, or that waterless tract of country surrounded by the Atbara, Nile, Blue Nile and Rahad rivers. There are ruins to be found in many parts of this present waste, and tradition has it that formerly this whole area was one grain field; and I daresay it could be again made into one, by utilising the water from these rivers. There is a road that leads from the island of Meroe to Berenice on the Red Sea, which was no doubt the seaport for the whole district round Thebes, Luxor, Karnak, Philœ, and all the ancient cities of this district. This road crosses the Suakin Berber route at Rowai, near Ariab, and then follows a course of a little east of north, down the Wady Haïet, where there are also ancient ruins, to Berenice. This road in ancient times must have been better watered than it is now; but still in several places in the Wady Haïet there is running water, and very likely the wells made use of are buried under the drift sand.

Between Berenice and Adulis or Zullah on the Red Sea coast, are found the remains of two ancient towns, one about 180 miles north of Suakin, which goes by the name of Suakin-Kadim, and is no doubt the Aydab of the old Arab geographers Edrisi and Abou Fida. When I visited this place before the late and much lamented Mr Theodore Bent went there, there was little to be seen; the ruins and foundations of the buildings were mostly covered with sand, and the only inscription in Cufic characters was on a small tablet. This I brought away and gave it to Sir Charles Holled Smith, who was then Governor-General of the Soudan. The water

cisterns were evidently for the use of the garrison and officials of the place, and the size of the permanent or stone buildings would give no idea of the extent this town covered, as the visitors and traders to the place would have lived in mat or grass huts which would quickly perish. On the surface any quantity of fragments of broken glass, pottery and beads are to be picked up, the same as in the vicinity of all old Egyptian cities. The other town is on the island of Errih, near Aghig, the southern portion of the Tokar or Khor Barca delta. This is supposed to be the ancient Pheron, and on the mainland, some few miles in the interior, is the hunting camp of the Ptolemies, who most likely hunted in the valley of the Khor Barca, where good sport is still to be obtained.

The road to Axum from Adulis can also be traced by ruins and inscriptions. The first ruins on the highlands are at Koheita, *vis-à-vis* to Adi-Caia and Teconda, and consist of well made tanks, foundations of houses, large and small, and burial ground with tombs cut out of the solid rock. Then at Gebel Arab Terika, the high hill that looks down on the Senafe plain where the English '67-68 camp was situated, and then again the hills to the west of Goose plain. The road here must have branched off westwards to Axum. On the road from Senafe to Goose plain can be seen a stone brought from Axum by Ali, a nephew of Mahomed, on his return to Mecca, A.D. about 570. This stone was evidently used for sacrifices, and is exactly similar to those now to be seen in front of the old temples at Axum, as it is of the same size and shape, and has on it exactly the same cuttings. The Moslems of Senafe and Agamé regard this stone with a certain amount of veneration, and those that live near always pray on Fridays at the spot, on account of it having been used by the family and friends of Mahomed, who were among the first converts to Islam. This and the fact that it is to be found in the Commentaries of the Koran, that Mahomed forbids Mahomedans to make war on the Christians of Axum, fixes one date of Abyssinian history to within a few years. Mahomed, when he had to flee from Mecca, sent some of his relations and followers to Axum for safety, where they were well treated by the ruler of that country, and it was not till Mahomed's return to Mecca that he sent for them to come back. This also proves that over 1300 years ago there must have been frequent communications between Axum and Mecca, and a trade between these places;

also that there was peace between Mahomed and his followers and the inhabitants of northern Abyssinia.

Between these ruins on Goose plain and Axum is the ruined city of Yeha, also full of old buildings, and several inscriptions are still extant. I do not believe it was ever such an important city as Axum, and it must have fallen into decay long before the latter.

From this date to the time of the Portuguese arriving in Abyssinia at the invitation of the ruler to help them expel the Mahomedans and their Galla allies under Mahomed Grayn is a blank. The Mahomedan invasion commenced in the latter end of the fifteenth century and extended well on into the sixteenth century, and, should information in a condensed form be required on the history of the country, no better book can be recommended than that of Sir Clements R. Markham, the present popular president of the Royal Geographical Society, who accompanied the English expedition in 1867-8 in an official capacity. This book was published in 1869, and contains very valuable, interesting, and correct information, and it also gives the sources from which the information was obtained, so it acts as a guide to what should be read by those that wish to study the subject.

The last thirty years of Abyssinia's history, the only portion I intend to touch on and that I believe I understand, is full of the most thrilling events, and no other country has perhaps suffered so much as she has done in so short a time. On the English leaving the highlands civil war took place, and it was not till 1871 that King John became King of Kings of Ethiopia; he reigned till March 1889, when he was wounded in battle fighting against the Dervishes at Gallabat, and died the next day. King Johannes, King of Kings of Ethiopia, was formerly Prince Kassai of Tigré, and by this name he was known in '67-68 to the English expedition, to which he was a great help, guarding our west flank from attack, and giving full permission to all his subjects to supply us with everything required in the shape of provisions and transport.

The amount of food and forage purchased in the country enabled the expedition to reach Magdala, destroy King Theodore's power and release the Englishmen and European captives, much quicker than if the food supplies had had to be transported from the coast. It may be said that if these supplies had not been obtained it would have been impossible to have reached Magdala at all in 1868, and our

force would have been weather-bound during the rainy season.

From the official Government accounts, the following are the amounts of supplies brought in in one month at Antalo by the inhabitants and bought by the commissariat; this total is irrespective of what was purchased by private individuals, and does not include live stock, poultry, etc:—Bread 29,375 lbs., flour 221,334 lbs., grain 86,891 lbs., hay 135,000 lbs., firewood 30,000 lbs., sundries 14,700 lbs., 50 bullocks and 1500 sheep, or in weight equivalent to 230 tons or 2800 mule loads. This was for one station alone. Along the whole road from Senafe to the Tacazze valley at Wandach, large quantities of supplies were obtained, saving much transport, which was as usual with the English the weak point of the expedition. I mention these supply figures to show firstly, the fertility of the country; and secondly, as all these goods were purchased and not requisitioned, what a good name the English have left behind them, which till this day I am happy to say still exists; and no doubt should events happen in the future which made it necessary for England to interfere in Abyssinian politics, we should again be received with open arms by the cultivators and lower class of the community. This was the late Ras Aloula's opinion, a man that knew the country better than any other official, and the best native general and strategist that Africa has perhaps produced in modern times.

The late King Johannes, known then as Prince Kassai of Tigré, came of a good family; his father was Dedjatch Mercha, the chief of the Tembien district, one of the provinces of Tigré. Tembien is one of the richest and most healthy parts of the whole of Abyssinia; it is watered by the Werri and Ghiva rivers, and has Abbi-Addi for its principal town. Prince Kassai's mother was the daughter of Dedjatch Dimtsu of Enderta province, chief town Macalle, the neighbouring province to the east of Tembien. Dimtsu married a sister of Sabagardis, the ruler of Agamé, the next northern province, chief town Adigrat, and was therefore related to all the best families in the north of Abyssinia. Sabagardis eventually became King of Tigré, and Prince Kassai being a grandchild of the sister of Sabagardis, was therefore related to the King of Tigré on the maternal side. He, however, won his way by the sword to the throne in spite of all opposition, and was crowned King of Kings of Ethiopia at the old historical church at Axum under the name of Johannes.

It is the custom of all kings of Abyssinia on being crowned at Axum to adopt some other name than what they were known by before, King Menelek being the only exception for many years; and this is the reason why many of the northern people up till now do not recognise him as King of Kings of Ethiopia, but only as Menelek, King of Shoa, a minor title entirely. Had King Menelek, after defeating the Italians at Adowa, made the short seventeen mile journey to Axum and been crowned as customary, no one in the length and breadth of the country would have questioned his title that he had so brilliantly gained at Adowa. There was some superstitious reason (superstition is one of the great failings of all Abyssinians), it is said, for his not doing so, and if some pretender was crowned at Axum by a new Abouna or chief priest from Egypt, he would very likely receive the support of all those hostile to Menelek.

The rulers of Abyssinia have always held their title by the sword, and the majority of the inhabitants, mercantile men and cultivators, little care who it is who rules, as their only wish is for a strong man and a settled government like they enjoyed for many years under King Johannes, in spite of the disturbed times caused by the many attempts by foreigners to invade the country and wrest the throne from him.

King Johannes had hardly won his way to the throne of the northern portion of Abyssinia when he had to face a series of intrigues; the moving spirit in them being the late Mons. Werner Munzinger, a Swiss, who had been many years resident in the north part of Abyssinia, but mostly at Keren, the chief town of the Bogos province. Munzinger had been attached to the English Intelligence Department during the expedition, and had had charge of both the English and French Consulates at Massowah. In 1868, seeing that the English Government did not intend to have anything more to do with Abyssinia, he first entered into communications with the French, and was instrumental in getting Waled-el-Michael, the Governor of the Province of Hamasen under King Johannes, to cede that territory to the French.

Waled-el-Michael or Ras Waldenkel was afterwards a well-known character on the Abyssinian borders, and the late General Gordon, when Governor-General of the Soudan, had great trouble with him. I knew the man intimately, and last saw him at Abbi-Addi in the province of Tembien in 1896, still an immensely powerful old man, standing over six feet

in height, and with snow-white hair, and just as thorough-paced old rascal as ever. He was allowed a certain amount of liberty and had about fifty unarmed followers with him, but his influence had gone.

Munzinger had married a landowner's daughter of the Hamasen, and gave out that she was a princess of that province; and through his wife, who knew the wives of nearly all the leading men, it was of course very easy to carry on intrigues and obtain information. A French expedition in the late spring of 1870 was got together, and everything was ready for its departure from Toulon, so as to arrive at Massowah before the end of the rains; but the Franco-German war broke out in the summer of that year and the expedition had to be abandoned, and France was again baulked in her designs on Abyssinia and in the Red Sea, which she had commenced before King Theodore had won his way to the throne.

France about ten years before this date (A.D. 1857) had entered into communications with Dedjatch Negūsye of the province of Semien, who had revolted against King Theodore, and Negūsye had promised the French what did not belong to him, the island of Dissei, the key of Annesley Bay and Zullah, in return for any help they might render. Negūsye was defeated before the French could aid him, and their attempt to get a footing in the country came to naught. The whole policy of France towards Abyssinia seems to consist in stirring up disputes and creating disturbances and trying to win a foothold in the country, and her new policy ever since she has come into possession of Djibuti has been most unfriendly to her neighbours. She can make no headway with her subjects in her hinterland, who are if anything worse off than they were before she came into the country. She has put King Menelek under many obligations which he no doubt is now sorry for, and the last scene between them is as yet still unacted. King Johannes, on the other hand, would have nothing to do with France, and although civil and courteous, refused all their overtures, which were many.

Munzinger, seeing that there was very little chance of immediately being able to do anything with France, turned his attention to the Egyptians who, after the defeat of King Theodore, began a more forward policy in the northern frontier of Abyssinia. After a long sojourn in Cairo he received the appointment of Governor of Massowah and its

neighbourhood, and the first thing he did on taking up his appointment was to annex the province of Bogos and fortify Keren. This gave the Egyptians a road through northern Abyssinia, from Massowah to Kassala, with posts at Algeden and Amideb. Keren was a place which offered a good basis for any attack on the fertile Hamasen and northern Abyssinia.

In 1875 the Egyptians claimed the river Mareb as their boundary, and an expedition assembled at Massowah and Sanheit or Keren to occupy the provinces of Hamasen and Oculu-cussēi or Halai. Waldenkel, who had been imprisoned by King Johannes when some correspondence from the French to him fell into the king's hands, was released, as he promised to raise his followers in the Hamasen to fight against the invaders. He certainly got together a few soldiers, and he was present at the fighting that took place between the Egyptians and Abyssinians in 1875. I may mention here that when Munzinger seized the Bogos country, King Johannes wrote to Ismael Pasha, the Khedive of Egypt, telling him that he might keep that country, provided he allowed Abyssinia to trade through Massowah and allow the Abyssinians to come and go without let or hindrance; this Ismael Pasha never did, and he considered that he would be able to take more of Abyssinia than was offered him.

The expedition started in October from Egyptian territory; one column from Sanheit or Keren *via* Asmara, and the other *via* the Kiagour pass, to the Gura valley; the two meeting in the fertile district of Goodofelasie. The leader of the expedition was Arekel Bey, a nephew of the late Nubar Pasha; with Arendrup Bey, a Danish officer in the Egyptian army, second in command, and Count Zichy, an Austrian officer, commanding one of the columns. The troops were well armed with Remington rifles, and their artillery consisted of mountain guns, and several Krupp field guns. The whole expedition was well equipped, and with ample military supplies of all sorts. An advance was made from Goodofelasie to the Gundet Valley which leads to the river Mareb which divides the Gundet valley from the Lala plain. The pass at Adi-Quala, the now frontier post of the Italians, was fortified; a good road which still exists was constructed down the pass, and a fortified camp was made about three miles down the valley.

The Abyssinian army was concentrated at Adowa and Adi-Abouna, with an advance force on the Lala plain. At

the commencement of November, the majority of the Egyptian troops left their fortified camp at daylight to advance to the Mareb. The road to the river was only about ten yards wide, and flanked on each side by dense mimosa trees, and fairly thick under-cover of the usual description, which prevented regular troops deploying into line, but was of little hindrance to the advance of irregular troops, of which the Abyssinian army is composed. Arekel Bey, and Count Zichy, who were leading, were fairly ambushed when within half an hour's march of their destination, and a fight at close quarters took place, sword and shield, and old muzzle-loading guns, against the breech-loader. In a short time the Egyptian advance force was wiped out, and Arendrup, with the rear force that was following close behind, tried to retreat to the fortified camp higher up the valley ; part of a black Soudanese regiment covering the retreat being annihilated, and even at this date showing their splendid fighting qualities. The Abyssinians then attacked the fortified camp, too large to be properly defended by the reduced numbers. It was protected by a ditch and big thorn zareba placed in front of three small rocky hills covered with giant boulders, and was a very strong position ; on looking at it, it might be deemed impregnable when defended by soldiers with breech-loaders against an enemy mostly armed with spear and sword, and if the whole force had waited the Abyssinian attack in this position they might have repulsed their enemy. Ras Aloula with his troops got round the left of the position, while the king and the rest of his army attacked the front and other flank ; the former managed to cut the line of retreat to Adi-Quala, and at last to force his way through the less strongly defended rear of the camp and a horrible massacre took place, quarter not being given or asked for.

The Egyptians lost everything they possessed ; Arekel Bey and Arendrup Bey, with the principal officers, were killed ; Count Zichy was mortally wounded and fell into King Johannes' hands, and received while he lived the best of treatment. The reserve force at Adi-Quala abandoned their position and fell back on the fortress of Keren, the inhabitants of the Hamasen attacking them and taking their revenge for the cruelties and plundering which were perpetrated by the Egyptians on their advance. But very few of the expedition returned to Egyptian territory, and Keren and Massowah were in a panic, the inhabitants seeking refuge on board the ships in the harbour.

The defeat at Gundet, or as the fight was called the battle of Guidi-Guidi, took place on the 7th November 1875, and on the same day Munzinger, who had by this time been made a Pasha in the Egyptian service, was killed, and his force entirely destroyed in the Danakil country near the salt lakes of Abbehebad. He, on behalf of the Egyptian Government, had been intriguing with Menelek of Shoa, and succeeded in getting a promise of aid from that potentate. The scheme was, while the Egyptians were attacking King Johannes in the north, Munzinger Pasha and King Menelek were to attack Abyssinia from the south *via* the Ifat district, and join the southern Mahomedan Gallas in Wollo and Yejju, who were then always willing to loot the Christians of Amhara and Tigré. Munzinger's expedition of between 400 and 500 men started in from Tadjurrah; he was accompanied by his Abyssinian wife and their child, and he also took with him a large supply of arms and ammunition to distribute to those who joined him. His force was attacked at night by the Danakils and Black Esa Somalis and were, with the exception of about twenty, all killed; Munzinger, his wife, their child, and all his staff being among the slain.

Werner Munzinger was certainly a clever man of his kind, but like many of the Swiss who leave their country, never to be trusted implicitly, as if they start to do a business it is generally done in an underhand or round-about way instead of in a straightforward manner. His great forte was intrigue, which never pays with a nation like the Abyssinians, who ought to be treated in the most open and simple manner possible, and then they understand that you mean to deal fairly with them. The last intrigue that led to his death was ill planned, and although he had lived many years in Abyssinia and had had as much experience of the country and its inhabitants as any European, he entirely underrated the capabilities of his enemies, under-estimated their fighting qualities and their fanaticism and hatred for the Moslems who for centuries had plundered Abyssinia, massacred the male population, and carried off the females and children into slavery, and still did so when he was Governor of Massowah, expeditions being fitted out from there to harry the highlands. He served many masters and never did service of much merit for any of them. He was a pleasant companion, a good linguist, and well informed on all subjects, and had fortune been kind to him, he might have made a lasting mark in history; he is now only remembered as having

made several interesting journeys in Africa and one in Arabia, and belonging to the circle of people who helped to ruin Egypt.

On the news of the disasters in Abyssinia reaching Cairo, Ismael, the Khedive, was determined to avenge the humiliation he had received at the hands of, what he was pleased to look upon as, a nation of savages. He was then full of enthusiasm for extending his frontiers to the south, and dreamt of an Egypt extending to the Lakes Victoria and Albert Nyanza, including a coast line from Suez to Zanzibar. The late Sir Samuel Baker's annexation of the Equatorial regions, which was at this time being administered by the late General Gordon, his first appointment under Egypt, had been well received by England and the Continental powers; and France, who at that time considered she ranked diplomatically before all others in Egypt and that her influence in the country was paramount, did not put any obstacles in the way of the Khedive's wish for revenge, although she alone was fully aware of all that had taken place through her Consul and the French Catholic mission. What had actually occurred in Abyssinia was not known to the other European powers, so preparations for a new campaign were actively pushed forward, and Tel-el-Kebir was made the depôt for the expedition. This place seems to be mixed up with disasters to Egypt, and in April and May 1876 it received the remnants of the Abyssinian catastrophe, and it also saw, a little over six years afterwards, the defeat of her own army by the English; its leader, Arabi Pasha, also having taken part in the Abyssinian campaign, and started for Massowah from Tel-el-Kebir, the place where he was also overthrown.

While the expedition was being got together in Egypt, the officials at Massowah and Keren were busy securing transport and intriguing with Ras Waldenkel, who was again in favour with King John, but who again turned traitor to his country and joined the Egyptians with a force of over 4000 men, which he had got together after the first Egyptian defeat. It was composed of all the bad characters of Tigré and Amhara, whom King Johannes and his other leaders were well rid of, and instead of proving a useful ally to the Egyptians, was hereafter a source of a great deal of trouble and expense. In February 1876 the Egyptian army left the environs of Massowah for the Gura plateau *via* the Kiagour pass. Some of the sources of the Mareb river spring from this plateau, which is well watered and very fertile. The number of the

invading force was never published, but it was known that the Egyptians had at least 20,000 men sent from Egypt, which did not include the regiments in the Soudan that proceeded to Abyssinia, or the irregular troops and Waldenkel's followers.

The Egyptian troops were commanded by Rhatib Pasha. Hassan Pasha, a son of the Khedive, accompanied the expedition for his father's political purposes, and Loring Pasha, an American military man, and not an adventurer as has been stated, was attached to the staff. He had seen plenty of service in the United States during the Civil War, and had lost an arm in action. The troops were a well-drilled, fine set of men, and on parade or at a review might be considered a model army. Their rifles were the Remington breech-loader, and their artillery consisted of several batteries of breech-loading Krupp field guns, mountain batteries, and rocket tubes. Their commissariat was ample, and they carried everything with them for permanently occupying the country. It was the opinion of the English Consul-General in Egypt, General Stanton, and other military men, that the Egyptian army at this epoch was the finest native army that existed, and it had been brought to this perfection by a competent staff of American officers who had seen plenty of service in their country.

The position chosen at Gura by the Egyptian staff for the operations against Abyssinia, which included the taking of Adowa and the Mareb as a boundary, was in a more open country than the cramped and rocky ground of the Gundet valley, but still the surface of the environs of this fortified camp was much broken and offered good cover to an approach within short musket range. The line of communications was worse than that on the higher Hamasen plateau, and to the west of the road were broken and rugged hills which offered no obstacle to the Abyssinians to manœuvre over with their bare feet, but were a great hindrance to a booted soldier carrying his kit and rations. The fighting commenced by the Abyssinians firing on the fortified camp, which naturally being of large size, offered a good target to the Abyssinian marksmen, but they retired, not having come to very close quarters. On the next day the king's army was seen some miles off, advancing to the attack. The Egyptians left their entrenchments and formed in order of battle; but there seems to have been many mistakes made, and their formation, owing to the bad nature of the ground, was not the most advantageous.

The Abyssinians outnumbered the Egyptians in the ratio of about four to one, there being about 60,000 fighting men of the former and about 15,000 of the latter on the ground. The engagement ended disastrously for the invaders, who, being outnumbered, were consequently outflanked by their more mobile foe and had to retire within the redoubts of their camp; and the day's work ended by the Abyssinians resting for the night in the vicinity, and part of the force under Ras Aloula the same evening cutting the line of communications with Kiagour. The battle commenced the next day by the Abyssinians trying to storm the fortifications, which they did not succeed in doing, not being well enough armed with breech-loading rifles to keep down the fire of the defenders. They partially filled up the ditches round some of the redoubts and nearly succeeded in obtaining an entrance, but they had to abandon the attack on account of their heavy loss. This ended all the important fighting, but there were afterwards many minor fights on the roads and at the small outposts before an armistice was concluded.

Ras Waldenkel retired to the Hamasen on the second day's fight, and on the entire defeat of the Egyptians to the Bogos country. He shortly commenced to raid and devastate the seat of his old Government, and turned the Hamasen plateau, formerly known by the name of the plain of the thousand villages, owing to its fertility and industrious population, into a howling wilderness of ruined houses, with a few half-starved peasantry. The nameless horrors that have been perpetrated in this once happy country are impossible to describe, nor would they be believed if they were put on paper.

Rhatib Pasha, who was a very enlightened and capable man as Egyptian officials go, commenced overtures for peace with King Johannes which, however, came to nothing, and the remnants of the Egyptian army during the armistice were allowed to retire on Massowah and Keren, after having lost in the two campaigns over 20,000 men, besides all their arms, cannon, military train, commissariat, treasure chests, and in fact everything they brought with them into the country. A great deal might be written on this attempt of Egypt on Abyssinia, but, as it is a thing of the past and Egypt will never attack Abyssinia again, it is only a matter of very secondary importance. One result of these campaigns was sowing the seeds of mutual dislike and mistrust between the officers of Egyptian nationality and those of Turkish and

Circassian origin in the Egyptian army. Arabi Pasha was then only a colonel of commissariat at Massowah. Osman Pasha Rifki, a Circassian Turk, was a brigadier-general, and afterwards became Minister of War in Cairo. These two and their partisans and followers commenced their quarrels at Massowah, and they continued them in Egypt and it ended by getting rid of the high officers of Turkish origin in the Egyptian service and then with Arabi Pasha's rebellion and English interference in Egypt.

Immediately after the defeat of the Egyptians, King Johannes made haste to the south of his dominions to settle with King Menelek who had invaded Abyssinia. He was again victorious, and Menelek had to do homage to King Johannes, who was now undisputed monarch of the whole of Abyssinia, the two minor kings being Menelek of Shoa and Tchlaihaimanout of the large and fertile Godjam province. To arrange the succession so there should be no quarrelling at the death of King Johannes, a marriage took place between his only legitimate son, named Ras Areya Selassie, and Zohdeta, a daughter of King Menelek. Ras Areya Selassie was to succeed King Johannes, and then any son that might result from the marriage. King Menelek having no legitimate son, the succession to the throne of Shoa on his death would be left an open question. Thus early in 1877 the whole of Abyssinia might be said to be quiet, and there was at last a chance of its being able to improve and become a very important country. Waldenkel was the only cause of anxiety, and he was only a local nuisance necessitating the king keeping a larger force under arms in the Hamasen than he otherwise would have done.

The command of the northern army and the governorship of the Hamasen at the death of Ras Bariou, who was killed in a battle fought between his forces and those of Waldenkel, was given by the king to that very gifted fighting man, Ras Aloula. He was the son of one of the minor chiefs of Tembien, and had known King Johannes from his childhood; he had been with the king since the earliest part of his career, and had won his spurs as a bold and brave leader and a clever strategist before his twentieth year. I can only say that my acquaintance with this man lasted for nearly twenty years, and I always found him most kind and sincere, and what he said could be believed; and, although he defeated the Italians, they bore him no ill-will, and they used to call him the Garibaldi of Abyssinia.

General Gordon's first introduction to the Abyssinians was in March 1877, and I am afraid from what he saw of that arch scoundrel, traitor and thief, Ras Waldenkel, and his followers, who were the scum of the north, that he came to the conclusion that the whole race were more or less the same. He formed, as it turned out, an opinion on the Abyssinian question which was not justified then, and has proved to be an incorrect one by events. He tried to make peace with Abyssinia and never could do so, owing to his having no independent witness, and when asked by King Johannes whether he was English, pointed to the "fez" or tarbush he wore, which is the emblem of the Turk. He, however, arranged an armistice in 1876 which was confirmed in 1877, and it lasted the whole time he remained as Governor-General. King Johannes greatly admired General Gordon and trusted him, and as long as he was in the Soudan, relations between the two countries were never strained. It was only several months after he threw up the Khedive's service that troubles again broke out on the frontier, and then entirely through the fault of the Egyptian officials.

For eight years, that is to say from 1876, after the defeat of the Egyptians, Abyssinia enjoyed the blessings of tranquillity and good crops, and it was perhaps the most peaceful and happy period of its history, and during these years the country improved with rapid strides. King Johannes was very popular, and he governed the country in a firm and just manner, and it was during this period that we lost golden opportunities to improve our position that may never occur again.

Ras Waldenkel's followers soon deserted him when they found there was to be no more fighting or plundering, and he was left with such a small force that he could not overawe the Egyptians, and, finding himself a stranger in a foreign land where he was disliked and slighted, he thought it was better to return to Abyssinia and demand pardon; this was not granted, and on his return he was imprisoned on one of the State Ambas in Tembien, and he disappears from Abyssinian history.

In 1882-83, before the Madhi's rebellion assumed large proportions, when there was a certain amount of confusion in the Soudan on account of Arabi Pasha's rebellion and the defeat of the Egyptians by the English, another Abyssinian sought refuge with the Egyptian authorities at Massowah; this was Fituari Debbub, a son of King Johannes' uncle,

Ras Areya. By his plundering the northern borders of Abyssinia and looting the caravans of the merchants trading to the coast, he nearly brought on hostilities between the two countries. In December 1883 I was sent down to Massowah by the late Valentine Baker Pasha and the late Admiral Sir Wm. Hewett to report on what was going on along the borders of Abyssinia, and to do what I could to bring about a more satisfactory state of affairs between the two countries. I found that the Governors of Massowah and Keren had both been harbouring the rebels; the one at Massowah Debbub and the other at Keren, the Barrambaras (or frontier guardian) of the Abyssinian province of the Dembelas, by the name of Kūfela. Debbub, towards the close of 1883, had left Massowah for Suakin to see the English officials who had arrived there when the Mahdi's rebellion had broken out in the eastern Soudan with Osman Digna as its leader, and when poor Consul Moncrieff, our Consul, had already sacrificed his life doing his duty, to offer his services to the English to attack Abyssinia. On my report of what he had been doing, reaching Suakin he was put under arrest.

In ten days after my arrival at Massowah, and on writing to the Abyssinian officials, I had everything quiet; trade going on again with the interior and the roads safe enough for merchants to come and go about their business, and a pressing invitation to again visit my old friend Ras Aloula, who was at his headquarters at Aditchlai. I regretted that I could not accept his invitation, as press of business kept me in the Massowah district. I rode all over the Kism Samhar country and along the frontier, only accompanied by four natives, our only arms being two rifles and a shot gun, and by travelling without an escort I determined to show the people I was not afraid of them. I found that the district was entire chaos and confusion and had never been visited by the Egyptian officials, and those in authority, instead of being at their posts, were living in close proximity to Massowah in perfect safety; and the shepherds who form the most numerous portion of the population had been living in a state of terror, and whenever the brigands had required money to spend in debaucheries at Massowah, they had plundered the flocks of the natives and had driven them into Massowah for sale.

I arrested many of these brigands and bad characters and shipped them off to Suakin to be turned into irregular troops under Baker Pasha, and it was these men that de-

fended Baker Pasha, Colonel Burnaby, and the staff at the second battle of El-Teb, and enabled them to get away from that terrible battle-field where so many Egyptians were slaughtered. The men I arrested were all good sporting shots with a rifle, but utterly undisciplined in a military point of view; but had their own way of skirmishing and scouting which is most effective and quite equal to our book theories; they never hesitated to attack a much larger force, and they were equally as mobile as the Dervishes, and they quite enjoyed shooting them down.

I have always found that the most effective way of getting information in these countries is not to sit in a Government office and hear tales got up for official ears, and examine spies and countrymen that are brought into the town where they can be recognised by others, and who are therefore in a mortal dread the whole time, and give answers that they think that the Government and questioner may like; but to go out into the country without an escort and an interpreter only, generally a confidential servant that talked Abyssinian and the local dialect in case the people did not talk Arabic, and speak to everyone that passes by, or go to the shepherds that are attending their flocks and get their news. There is always this certainty, that the shepherds will not keep their flocks in danger, and that some of their friends are on the look-out for robbers or any force that an enemy may have close, so that ample notice may be given to get their animals into a place of safety. Ask them for a drink of milk, and offer them a dollar which they will not always accept, and they are generally willing to answer all questions, and very often volunteer information. I have always found that the correct information is obtained in the desert and not in the town; under the blue sky and in the open air, truth is far commoner between white and black man than it is between four walls in a room in a Government building. Intelligence Department please kindly note.

My many years' experience in Suakin led me to believe that our Military Intelligence Department was very badly served, because it was inside the walls of the town instead of outside, and the farce for a long time was kept up of partly covering the spies in a sack or in a garment; their walk or their legs were recognised by some peculiarity or by some scar, and it is known to very few, but nevertheless it is a fact, that many people can tell even to whom the foot-

marks in the sand belong, and they can also pick up and follow the trail of a camel out of a herd and know the different footprints of the different animals.

After the English campaign at Suakin under General Sir Gerald Graham, V.C., in the spring of 1884 was over, Admiral Sir W. Hewett, V.C., was sent by the English Government on a mission to King Johannes, and from that date England again commenced to have dealings with Abyssinia. The king had surprised everyone in what he had achieved since he had been given the present of arms and ammunition by Lord Napier of Magdala in the summer of 1868. His character had then been under-estimated, and he had now won his way to the throne of a united Abyssinia, despite many obstacles, and certainly with less cruelty than any other previous monarch had practised. King Theodore's reign had been marked by atrocities of the most appalling nature, and the result was that at his death he only had the fortress of Magdala that he could call his own. During the whole of his reign many parts of his country were unsafe, while it was in 1884 the boast of King Johannes that a child could pass through his dominions unharmed. His early experience also of the Taltal, Azebu, Wollo and Yejju Gallas was most useful to him, and no one before had ever kept these turbulent tribes in such good order. It is said that Cromwell was the only Englishman that ever did or ever will understand the Irish, and Johannes up till now is the only Abyssinian that properly controlled these turbulent people, first by the sword and then by kindness; they are now not to be trusted, and are a great source of annoyance to the peaceful merchants and cultivators along the road that our expedition took in 1867-68.

It will be seen in 1884 that Abyssinia had been neglected by the English for sixteen years. If any intelligent Indian trained official had been left behind to advise and help Prince Kassai, as he was then, we should now have had some return for the money spent over the expedition in trade and also the entire friendship of the Abyssinian people. The country would also have been spared many miseries; thousands upon thousands of human lives would not have been wasted as they have been; and we should have had an ally in a country that will yield our merchants good returns in the future, and a friendly population that is bound to play its part in the near future, not only in Africa, but on our highway to the East, and perhaps remotely in

European politics. What is certain is, that Abyssinia must either be entirely friendly to us or unfriendly; half measures will always be dangerous. As an ally with either France or Russia, and the open door at Djibuti, Menelek with his enormous army will always prove a formidable enemy; and if unfriendly, our Soudan conquest is valueless, as it can never be made to pay its expenses if large frontier garrisons have to be kept up.

I think that the late Admiral Hewett, on his return from his mission to Abyssinia, was thoroughly alive to the importance of the country; and had he lived, that his counsels would have been listened to, and that we should not have neglected the undoubted opportunities that we had then, and that we should be only too pleased to win back. It must have been patent to the most ordinary observer, that unless we kept our nation prominently before the Abyssinians and their rulers, that other nations, especially France, would not be long in trying to obtain a diplomatic foothold in the country where she had several times failed. This they have already done, and during the last few years we have played a very secondary and not quite a dignified rôle, and are now only trying to regain what we never ought to have lost, namely the paramount foreign influence with prince, priest and peasant; unless we can regain this our position will always be a difficult one, necessitating large sums of money being expended on frontier garrisons for defensive purposes round the vast area through which we are now being brought into contact with the officials and inhabitants of Abyssinia. It is now impossible to blockade them in their highlands, as the key of the road by which they can obtain supplies has passed into other hands; and although there are many ways into the interior, I hardly know one by which it would be safe to get out by should a temporary reverse to an invading force take place.

In my book, "'83 to '87 in the Soudan," I gave a full account of Admiral Hewett's mission to Abyssinia, and it would be useless to quote from it here. In the appendix of this book Nos. 2, 3 and 4, the several treaties made between England and Abyssinia will be found, with comments thereon which ought to be carefully read. So I now pass to what took place between Abyssinia and the Dervishes, the second enemy that attacked their country. The first approach of the followers of the Mahdi on the Abyssinian frontier commenced in 1884, when Kassala was cut off from Keren, the Dervishes

having blocked the roads. By Admiral Hewett's treaty, King Johannes agreed to help England and Egypt to relieve and withdraw the garrisons of Egyptian forts and the inhabitants of the towns, that wished to leave, situated along his north and north-eastern frontiers. All the arrangements and details for carrying out this work were intrusted to the king's fighting general, Ras Aloula, who performed his arduous task and safely delivered the garrisons of Amedeb, Algeden, and Keren on the northern frontier, and Ghirra and Gallabat or Metemmeh on the north-west and western frontiers. These five stations were the only ones throughout the length and breadth of the Egyptian Soudan that did not fall into the hands of the Mahdi; Ras Aloula accomplishing what England with all her resources was unfortunately unable to perform with Singat and Tokar situated only within a few miles of Suakin.

Late in 1884 Ras Aloula was asked to go to the relief of Kassala, which he consented to do, but was told that orders would be sent him when he was to start; the orders were delayed week after week and month after month. He informed those that had the management of the negotiations that unless he received orders to advance before the rains set in, it would be impossible for his army to go to Kassala on account of the state of the roads, and that the town would fall from starvation before he could render any assistance. Well armed as Ras Aloula's army was, he had the utmost contempt for the Dervishes, and was longing to have a turn at the infidels. He was no fanatic, and did not object to the Moslem religion so much as the Egyptian officials, whom he looked upon as a pestilential set of robbers, their word never to be believed, as they were at the bottom of every attack that had ever been made upon his country. Fanaticism was never one of his weak points, as he never interfered with the Moslems in his governorate, and several of his agents and many of his soldiers were of this religion. He thoroughly understood the Dervishes, and that it was not only impossible for him or any Abyssinian, but any true Mahomedan as well, to have anything to do with them without, as he used to express himself, being defiled.

It was impossible to find a more capable and energetic leader in Abyssinia than Ras Aloula for dealing with these men, and it was a great pity for many reasons that more use was not made of Abyssinia at the time, as what they had been asked to do they had carried out in a most satisfactory manner.

In the spring of 1885 the Gallabat and Ghirra garrisons had arrived in Abyssinia, and at the same time Ras Aloula made his final appeal to be allowed to proceed to Kassala to relieve that garrison before the rains set in, which they do towards the end of June. In July, in the middle of the rainy season Kassala fell, proving that the information of the Ras and what he told the Egyptian officials had been correct; and it was not till August that further arms and ammunition as well as money were sent from Suakin to him to get him to proceed to the relief of the only Egyptian garrison that still held out, and which he knew had already fallen. The Ras has repeatedly told me that he informed the Egyptians that the majority of his army is always disbanded in the month of June to enable the men to go to their villages to plant their crops, and it is only on Holy Cross day, in September, that they come back to headquarters, when all the planting has been finished. Unless they can plant their crops during the rainy season, the expense of keeping an army together during the rest of the year is very great, as the soldier has to be given rations instead of bringing them or having them sent to him, and the peasants in the vicinity of the head-quarters of the army suffer.

The army under Ras Aloula left Asmara about the middle of September, immediately after the festival of the Holy Cross, and reached Kufit, where Osman Digna's army was encamped under the command of the Dervish leader Mustapha Hadal. Belata Gabrou commanded the advance guard of the Abyssinians, mostly composed of cavalry or mounted men, and on coming up with the enemy immediately attacked them and broke his way through the Dervish force, but got cut off from the main body of the Abyssinians, consisting of the infantry under the command of Ras Aloula. Belata Gabrou was killed soon after the commencement of the battle, and the cavalry lost heavily owing to the broken ground and bush, but they rallied when they found themselves some way in the rear of the Dervish position and only camp followers to oppose them, and reformed. By this time the main body of the Abyssinians had come into action and had also outflanked the Dervishes on each wing and had driven them in; they had broken their centre as well,* and a terrible massacre took place, not a single Dervish being given quarter.

* The Abyssinian centre was in phalanx formation, the last time this order of battle was used in Abyssinia, as they are now all armed with breechloading rifles and attack in loose order.

Those that retired met the cavalry after they had reformed, who drove them into the thick bush, and the day ended in a complete victory for the Abyssinian army, who lost about 2000 men killed on the field and in following the routed Dervishes, besides over double the number wounded. The Dervishes left over 3000 fighting men killed on one of the positions they held, but this does not include what were killed during the retreat, nor their women and non-fighting men, of which there were a great number. Putting their total loss at 10,000 would not be too many.

I had with me for over two years a servant who was then with the Dervishes, and he used to tell me all about the fight and the incidents of the campaign and the fall of Kassala. He was a petty merchant and slave dealer, or slave stealer, by trade, and he and many others of his class joined Osman Digna, as they believed they would have an easy task in defeating the Abyssinians, and that they would be able to procure many women and children that they would be able to sell at a high price at the coast; the women of the Abyssinians and Gallas always fetching a much higher rate than the blacks and negroes. He, with one or two more of his friends, escaped with their lives, but wounded, and lost everything they possessed.

Osman Digna was nearly captured; the Abyssinians twice passed him within a few yards while he was hiding in the thick bushes with which this country is covered. After the battle of Tamaai in 1884 he also had a narrow escape, our scouts passing his hiding place among the rocks a few feet above the road. Osman Digna has never taken part in any engagement since he was first wounded on the attack of the Government House at Singat in 1883, when he got the bone of his right arm shattered above the wrist, a bullet wound in the thigh, and a sword-cut over the head; since then he has always allowed his followers to do any fighting there is to be done, and tells them to go and fight while he prays for their victory. He keeps out of rifle range, and the moment he sees his men defeated makes off as quickly as possible to a safe place. He always has the quickest dromedary or the best horse that money can buy, so is always safe from capture, and if he was sighted and followed, the speed of his animal would not allow him to be overtaken. He knows every path and well in the Soudan, having brought his caravans of slaves by the nearly unknown paths from the interior, and he is of course known to all the slave dealers and bad characters in

the country, who protect him and give him information.* I believe that Brewster Bey, the Khedive's English secretary, is the only Englishman besides myself that knew this man, and I had in olden days several commercial transactions with him, and found him fairly honest but a very shifty customer. He is a middle-sized, very thick-set and strong man, and has one peculiarity of never being able to look a white man in the face; his chest is covered with curly hair and he has shaggy eyebrows and bristly hair growing out of his ears and nostrils, and once seeing him he never could be forgotten. Admiral Poulett, who was captain of H.M.S. *Wild Swan*, had the honour of ruining him by capturing his slaves and cargo off the Soudan coast north of Suakin, and in my book, "'83 to '87 in the Soudan," I give his pedigree and what he was. By last accounts he is still alive and likely in future to give a good deal of trouble with his slave-dealing friends.

The battle of Kufit cost the Dervishes in fighting men and followers about ten thousand people, as nearly all the wounded that escaped died afterwards from want of food and the hardships encountered in the retreat; and it was a pity that no forward movement was made from Suakin to clear the Dervishes from its environs, as if Ras Aloula's success had been followed up, it would have been the death-blow to the Khalifa's power in the eastern Soudan.

The next fight between Abyssinia and the forces of the Khalifa took place after the Abyssinians withdrew their Gallabat frontier garrison. This was necessitated by the forward movement of the Italians from Massowah and Menelek's intrigues with them; the latter, after the death of Ras Areya Selassie (the son of King Johannes), who had married Zohdeta, King Menelek's daughter, and had left no child, made all his preparations so as to be prepared to seize the throne on the death of King Johannes or at any favourable opportunity. King Johannes was greatly worried at the time; he had not only lost his favourite and only legitimate son, who died of consumption and was buried at Macalle, but he was threatened by the Italians on the north, the Dervishes on the west, the Danakils pushed by the Italians to raid the highlands on

* Since writing this Osman Digna has at last been captured trying to get across to Jeddah and Mecca, evidently to make arrangements to carry on the slave trade; his capture will not stop the trade as there are many keen traders still left, and Osman Digna was only partly a successful man, and there are many who have never been caught and carried all their ventures through. Instead of executing this scoundrel he will now end his days in peace in Egypt.

the south-west, and by Menelek, who had received every help from Italy, on the south.

He was of course the natural enemy of his western invaders, but from the north he ought to have been safe if our treaty with him went for anything. Look at our behaviour to King Johannes from any point of view and it will not show one ray of honesty, and to my mind it is one of our worst bits of business out of the many we have been guilty of in Africa, and no wonder our position diplomatically is such a bad one with the rulers of the country at present. England made use of King Johannes as long as he was of any service, and then threw him over to the tender mercies of Italy, who went to Massowah under our auspices with the intention of taking territory that belonged to our ally, and allowed them to destroy and break all the promises England had solemnly made to King Johannes after he had faithfully carried out his part of the agreement. The fact is not known to the British public and I wish it was not true for our credit's sake; but unfortunately it is, and it reads like one of the vilest bits of treachery that has been perpetrated in Africa or in India in the eighteenth century.

King Menelek had made friends with the Italians, who were hostile to King Johannes, and he was perfectly aware of it, and he also suspected him with very good reason of also being friendly with the Dervishes, as they were in the habit of sending people to Shoa *via* the Blue Nile. In his mind there could only be one opinion of this conduct, namely, that the king of the southern portion of his dominions would spare no means and would stop at nothing so long as he could obtain possession of the crown. The most pressing of his enemies were the Dervishes, and he decided to deal with them first and then the others in detail. He therefore commenced preparations for the defence of his country by assembling a large army to drive back the Dervishes and punish them for the cruelties they had perpetrated in their invasion from the province of Metemmeh of his sub-kingdom of Godjam.

Gallabat as a possession is entirely useless to the Abyssinians, as it necessitates a large garrison being kept in a hot and unhealthy climate and the Abyssinian hill men cannot remain there for any length of time, as after a sojourn of about a year the mortality amongst them becomes excessive. After its abandonment by Egypt and its relief by the Abyssinians, it was occupied by the local tribes who paid tribute

to King Johannes, he promising them protection when they were attacked.

When the first big invasion of Abyssinia took place in 1887 by the Dervishes under Abu Angar, the Abyssinian army was much scattered; some were in the north watching the northern frontier both against the Italians in the east and the Dervishes in the north-west, others were at their homes cultivating, and some in the south-east watching the Danakils and Gallas, who had also been incited to attack Abyssinia. King Tchlaihaimanout of Godjam had only his badly armed population and few soldiery to meet Abou Angar's large force of picked men. The Dervishes gained, after severe fighting, a complete victory, taking Gondar and devastating the greater portion of the Dembea province, and capturing many of King Tchlaihaimanout's family and many thousands of women and children, killing all the useless people that were too old to be of any use, and the young babies that could not walk.

In the following year, 1888, another invasion by Abou Angar took place, but in the meantime King Tchlaihaimanout had got together the best of his remaining soldiers, who were armed with rifles given him by King Johannes, and he had also been reinforced by many troops belonging to the armies of Ras Michael, Ras Mangesha and Ras Aloula, chiefly commanded by their fituaris or leaders of the advance guard. On this occasion the Dervishes were badly beaten, as they never could come to hand-to-hand fighting with the infantry armed with rifles, and the Abyssinians hardly lost a man.

King Johannes in the winter of 1888-89 had been making every preparation for a long campaign against the Dervishes, which he was to command in person; and so that the Dervishes should not be taken by surprise he gave them notice that he was coming to attack them, so that as many as possible might be got together at Gallabat to receive the punishment that they deserved. He also wrote to the Khalifa to tell him that he would march to Omduraman and attack him.

The Dervish camp at Metemmeh was a large zareba-ed enclosure, protected by a ditch and several redoubts, and it is said to have contained at least 70,000 fighting men and perhaps double the number of followers; dhurra had been grown and collected in the fertile country for miles round to feed this enormous force. The Abyssinian army was of

about the same number, nearly all of them armed with rifles ; the Dervishes could not count an eighth of these arms, and were consequently at a great disadvantage despite that they were fighting behind entrenchments, which, however, owing to faulty construction, they had to look over to fire from, thereby exposing themselves to the Abyssinian marksmen. The battle commenced soon after daylight on the 9th March, and lasted till some time after the noon-day hour. Ras Mangesha, the king's illegitimate son, and Ras Aloula commanded on one wing; the king and his picked troops the centre ; and Ras Michael of the Wollo Galla country and King Tchlaihaimanout of Godjam the other wing.

The Dervish position was thoroughly surrounded except in one small space, and the seething mass of humanity that it contained offered a large target to the Abyssinians, who did terrible execution before they made their final attack. They burnt the thorn zareba in many places and filled up the ditch, the men that accomplished the work being covered at a short range by the rifles of their companions. Ras Mangesha and his troops were the first to gain an entrance on one side, and Ras Michael soon made good his attack on the other. The mat and grass huts with which the enclosure was crowded got fired in many places, and amongst the smoke and confusion a few Dervishes escaped through a part of the fortifications that had not been attacked, and made off to join a small force encamped not far away that had not taken part in the engagement. Facing King Johannes' bodyguard, one small redoubt, strongly fortified and held by the black slave soldiers of the Dervishes, still held out, and their rifle fire was doing some execution. The king, getting angry that it had not been taken in the rear by the troops that had entered the sides of the fortifications and who were engaged in plundering, went forward to attack it with his followers. The gaudy dresses worn by his staff, with their silver shields and the bright silks, drew the fire of the defenders. King Johannes was struck by a bullet that traversed the lower part of his arm and entered the intestines near the navel, taking into the wound a part of his dress. He still gave orders and kept on the field till the redoubt was rushed, and those in it all killed.

On the news of the king being wounded reaching the different commanders of high rank, they all retired to where the king was and left their soldiers to go on with the pillage, burning the houses and massacring the Dervishes

who had not given in. Unfortunately the complete victory was not followed up by the cavalry, or but few would have lived to tell the tale of the Gallabat slaughter. The wounds received by the king were at first thought not to be very severe, the arm only bleeding to any great extent, but towards morning grave complications set in and the king knew that his end was approaching.

On his death-bed, before many of his great generals he acknowledged Ras Mangesha as his son; but no details of succession were arranged amongst those present, and no allegiance was sworn and no agreement come to before the king died. His death occurred about twenty-four hours after he was wounded, most likely from peritonitis; he had no doctor with any European skill with him, and his wounds were attended to by his servants only.

I learnt the particulars of his death from his own priest, who was with him at the time, from Ras Aloula, and many others who were present, among them being the brother of Ledj Mashesha, who came to England with his uncle, Ledj Mertcha, Envoy of King Johannes, who visited Her Majesty the Queen at Osborne. Poor Ledj Mashesha, whom many of my readers may remember in 1884, was killed in attacking the redoubt from which the king was wounded, his brother burying his body on the field of battle.

On the king's death on the 10th March, quarrels commenced as to the succession, and the different chiefs all started back to Abyssinia with the captives and the plunder including all the grain that they had taken from the Dervishes. Many of them left by night and more at daylight next morning. On the 11th, in the afternoon, old Ras Areya, the king's uncle, a man of nearly eighty years of age, who had played a wonderful part in Abyssinian history, was left with a few followers to bring back the king's body for burial. The body had been cut in half so that it could be carried more easily, and was put in a clothes box so it could be laden on a mule. Only a few of the king's devoted servants remained behind, with a few priests and their armed servants. On the 12th, while following the Tacazze road, the sad and mournful procession was overtaken by a few Dervishes and some Arabs who had returned on the night of the 10th to reconnoitre Gallabat, and when they found it abandoned they had followed one of the lines of retreat to find out what was going on and the reason the Abyssinian victory had not been followed up.

Poor old Ras Areya could have escaped, but he preferred

remaining with the body of his old sovereign, and he and a few of his soldiers and the bravest of the king's servants, who had lost their all, and had no more prospects to live for, died defending the remains of their old master. Ras Areya was last seen standing alongside the box containing the king's body, after having expended all his ammunition, with his shield and sword in his hands, defending himself, till at last he was speared by a Dervish from behind, and died fighting gamely like the fine old warrior that he was.

I was told this by a priest who was present, and who saw the Dervishes like a pack of dogs worrying round the last that stood, and when the skirmish was nearly finished he got away after being badly wounded. The Dervishes were then breaking open the packages and baggage. The last words of old Ras Areya were: "that he was now old and done for, that his time had come, and it was useless at his age to serve another master that he knew little about, and it was better to die like a man fighting unbelievers, than like a mule in a stable." Whatever may be said against the Abyssinian of the higher class, and he has many faults, cowardice and fear of death are not among them, and they mostly die game. I used to hear from two of Ras Areya's daughters at Macalle many tales about their father. He had a very large family and was a gay old man.

The loss of the Abyssinians in the battle of Gallabat was most trifling compared with that of the Dervishes, and afterwards in the return to Abyssinia, it was only the very small force that was left with the king's body that suffered.

Since the battle of Gallabat, although small raids by the Dervishes have taken place into Abyssinia plundering and slave capturing, they never again tried to invade the country in force; perhaps from the enormous loss they had sustained at Gallabat, or more likely that the Khalifa had come to some understanding with the new ruler. The Dervish fights in the north were afterwards always with the Italians.

The loot obtained when the king's body was taken was sent to the Khalifa, together with the heads of King Johannes and his uncle, Ras Areya, and these trophies, together with the king's papers and private effects, enabled the Khalifa to magnify what was really a terrible defeat for his followers into a great victory. The heads I believe found their way to Egypt, but what became of the remains of fallen monarchy history does not say. Little can be said in favour of the

rulers of provinces that took part in the fight making no attempt to recover the body of their king; but they all had their private affairs to settle now a change of ruler was to take place, and all Abyssinians are entirely of the opinion that a live man is better than a dead monarch.

The country that King Johannes ruled over at his death had greatly improved during the time he was on the throne. The leading men were more enlightened than their predecessors, and took more interest in the welfare of their subjects. There were more rich merchants than formerly, and owing to the brigandage being nearly put down, internal trade in the country had greatly increased and more foreign goods were imported in exchange for the natural products of Abyssinia. The peasant and cultivator were also better off and less molested by the soldiery, as only enough men were kept permanently under arms to enable the king to enforce his rule, and it was only in war time when expeditions had to be undertaken that the able-bodied peasantry were called out.

A lot of things have been published about King Johannes' cruelty to smokers and to other people for petty crimes; these are all greatly exaggerated, and I never came across, in all my visits to Abyssinia, a single native that had been mutilated by the loss of nose for snuffing or lips for smoking, as was reported by the king's detractors. I have made careful inquiries into this accusation, and the only approach to it I can find is, that on some four or five occasions men caught smoking and snuffing in or near the precincts of the royal palaces have had their lips and nose slightly scarified so as, until the slight wound healed, they could not use tobacco. King Johannes did not like the smell of tobacco, and he certainly had a right to prohibit its use near him or on his own premises by his own subjects. He never prohibited its use to Europeans, and has repeatedly told them if they wished to smoke in his presence that they might. Some of them, I am sorry to say, had the bad taste to do so. They would not have dared to smoke or snuff in the presence of European royalty if these habits had been distasteful at Court. Ledj Mertcha, the Abyssinian envoy to the Queen, was very fond of snuff, and he used to tell me stories about the king speaking to him about his habit, as he used always to have stray grains of it left on his clothes. On one occasion the old man took out his silver snuff box, a present from an English friend, and was going to help him-

self, quite forgetting he was in the king's presence. His Majesty said: "Not before me, Ledj Mertcha, whatever you may do before others"; and the box went back into his pocket very quickly.

I think it a great pity that many people will tell "yarns" that have no foundation; the more they travel the more they are added to, and untruths get spread about, sometimes, but not always, to the detriment of individuals that are accused of things they have never done; and I am sorry to say that there are officers of Her Majesty's services that have newspaper war services that are not strictly founded on facts, and what is the worst part of it, these supposed deeds are not contradicted.

Regarding the punishment of petty crimes during King Johannes' reign, they were no doubt treated severely; but the country has no small jails, and the corporal punishment meted out has an excellent effect, and it is a pity that flogging is not more resorted to in Europe, as properly administered it has not the degrading effect attributed to it, and is only feared by those that deserve it. It would put a stop to many petty crimes, and the prisons would not be so full as they are now. Mutilation, such as losing a hand or a foot for stealing, is of course to an Englishman's idea a horrible punishment, but this is never done for the first offence; whipping is tried at first to break the offender off his bad habit, or being put in chains and made to clear up the enclosures of the officials. When a man is met minus a hand or foot, it is a certain sign that he was or is an incorrigible thief, therefore visitors to Abyssinia should keep these people away from their camps the same as the Abyssinians do from their houses; they always have food given them by the natives and sent on their way, very likely for the reason that if they are not given a trifle, they will annex something more valuable. A thief in Abyssinia carries his character about with him wherever he goes, and that is the reason why a man when he meets with an accident dislikes having any one of his members amputated.

King Johannes as a monarch certainly ranks before any of his modern predecessors, and his death was a great blow to English influence in the country, although our Government treated him so badly; and we shall sooner or later no doubt regret that for political reasons we gave up to Italy what we ought to have maintained for ourselves, and what could have been done for a very small expenditure

that our country would never have felt, pennies granted by the Treasury officials annually would have saved perhaps millions of pounds and thousands of human lives, and we shall be lucky to get through this business without another terrible sacrifice of human life. My opinion is that it is another of our lost opportunities in Africa, of which there seem to be so many, and so there still will be until we have a proper African department in London to look after the enormous amount of work that this continent entails; our liabilities increase at a great rate, and the staff that looks after the business is not increased in ratio, so things are pigeon-holed, and the egg that has been put away hatches unexpectedly and makes a mess which takes a terrible amount of work to clean up, and often produces a chick that is very troublesome and entails great responsibilities. Pigeon-holing a document brought about the Abyssinian war of 1867-68, and by hitherto neglecting this question we are now face to face with a problem that will take a lot of solving and may end in a way that few people little imagine.

I trust and hope that it will be settled in a satisfactory manner, but I am very sceptical as to the result.

CHAPTER III

ABYSSINIAN HISTORY—*continued*

WE must now return to the Italians and their dealings with Abyssinia. It will be remembered that Massowah was handed over to them in February 1885, at the time the second English expedition was being assembled at Suakin with the object of breaking Osman Digna's power and opening up the Suakin Berber route, and also to construct a railway from that port to the Nile; the route was opened up after a delay of thirteen years, and the railway, the only way to open up the Soudan to trade, is not built. The position in the north of Abyssinia was this: according to the treaty made by Admiral Hewett, Abyssinia had occupied Keren and the Bogos country, the Egyptian garrisons had been withdrawn, and Kassala was the only garrison that held out in the whole of the Soudan. The inhabitants of the north and their new masters were at peace, and they were no doubt the gainers and in a better position than they ever were before, as they formerly had to pay taxes to the Egyptian Government for which they got no protection, and also for many years they had to support the exactions of Ras Waldenkel, Fituari Debbub, and Barrambarras Kufela, who were nominally under Egyptian protection, besides paying tribute to Ras Aloula whenever he came down to levy it; as although an armistice which I mentioned before existed between the two countries, the question of frontier and the taxation of the natives had not been settled.

The nearest Abyssinian frontier post to Massowah was at Ghinda, and the neutral ground commenced at Sabagumba at the foot of the Ghinda pass and extended to Sahaati, where caravans were to be taken over by the Massowah authorities from the Abyssinians; or, in other words, the safety of all commercial caravans between Massowah and Sahaati rested with the Massowah officials, and after that point with Abyssinia. This was an excellent arrangement, as it fixed the responsibility of both parties, and gave back to Abyssinia

what was rightly hers and what neither Turkey or Egypt had ever been able to hold. Keren had been annexed, as I mentioned before, by Munzinger Pasha ; it gave Egypt a road from Massowah that she required for political reasons, but it was an annexation that was ill advised and not worth fighting about, as the commercial road to Kassala from the coast is *via* Suakin ; the two roads are about equi-distant, but that *via* Suakin is by far the easier of the two.

During the first two years of the Italian occupation of Massowah and its immediate environs, their chief object was to improve the town and port and enter into friendly relations with the neighbouring tribes, and by the close of 1886 they had taken the whole coast line from Rarat in the north to Raheita in the south. Rarat is a native sailing-craft anchorage from where goods are shipped to the Habab country, and Raheita is to the south of Assab Bay, the first Italian colony in the Red Sea, procured by the Rubattino Steam Ship Company soon after the opening of the Suez Canal as a coaling station. Through Assab Bay and the Danakil country they entered into negotiations with King Menelek of Shoa, and through this road to southern Abyssinia they not only sent him, but allowed him to import arms and ammunition without consulting King Johannes ; this of course he was soon aware of, and it made him distrust the Italians greatly.

As soon as the Italians considered they were strong enough to make a forward movement towards Abyssinia they started from the environs of Massowah, which they had strongly fortified on the land side, and seized Sahaati and erected a small redoubt there on the high land commanding the water supply. Ras Aloula at that time had left Asmara his headquarters for the Basen country in the direction of Kassala to punish the Dervishes for raiding the Dembelas provinces. On hearing the news of the Italian advance he returned to Asmara and informed the Italian officials that they were infringing the treaty between Abyssinia, Egypt and England, and that any further movement of troops towards Sahaati would be considered a hostile action and would be treated accordingly. He also pointed out that the redoubt was built on the high land and could only be used for one purpose, namely against Abyssinia. The answer to his letter was the strengthening of the redoubt and an increased garrison. Ras Aloula then advanced to Ghinda and the Ailet plain just above Sahaati, and on the dispatch of a

strong body of troops from Massowah to Sahaati, the Ras having learnt of their departure from his spies, and before they could arrive at the fortifications that had been erected, he attacked them at Dogali, about a mile from the commencement of the water at Sahaati, and entirely defeated them; a very few, and those nearly all wounded, getting back to Massowah. The Abyssinians as customary mutilated the dead, which created great indignation at the time; in another part of this book I explain the reason, and no doubt it will take a great many years before this custom dies out, intercourse with more civilised people and education will only put a stop to it. I believe the American and Canadian Indians when they fight still take scalps, and their possession is considered a mark of valour the same as medals to the civilised soldier.

Dogali was the first and only fight that took place between the Italians and Abyssinians during the reign of King Johannes, and the Italians after the battle sent to Massowah a very large force of troops of all arms and awaited in their own territory further attacks from the Abyssinians that never took place. There were faults on both sides; according to our English treaty with Abyssinia, the Italians had no right to go on the high ground round Sahaati and fortify it, nor did they justify their advance, which they could easily have done by saying it was a defensive measure against the Dervishes; and Ras Aloula was in the wrong for going farther than Sahaati and attacking the Italians in their own zone, but no frontier general, in any part of the world, would allow neutral territory to be occupied and fortified without doing what he could to prevent his enemy from seizing and erecting fortifications on a strategical position that did not belong to him. Appendix V. gives the names of the Governors of the Italian colony of Erithrea and the dates that they took command, and from it can be seen that the frequent change of rulers must have had a detrimental effect on the welfare of the colony.

The first forward movement of the Italians into Abyssinia took place towards the end of 1889, some time after the death of King Johannes, and when King Menelek had not yet made good his position as King of Kings of Ethiopia, and when disputes were still rife amongst the Tigréans and Amharans. The advance of the Italians was unopposed, and once they had made good their foothold on the upper plateau and fortified themselves no Abyssinian force could drive them out, and the only fear was that if a big reverse in the open

took place and the forts were invested, that they might fall from starvation before reinforcements could arrive from Italy. There is no doubt, however, that the Italians through Count Antonelli, their envoy to King Menelek, had come to an agreement together that Italy should help him to the throne, and the price should be the provinces of Bogos, Hamasen and Oculu-cussei, with the Mareb, Belessa, and Mai Muna rivers for the frontier. This country they took at the time and they hold it till the present day in spite of the Adowa defeat. It was the presents of arms from the Italians that enabled Menelek, after the death of King Johannes, to overawe all opposition in Godjam, Amhara and Tigré, take the Harar province and subdue the southern Gallas.

After the capture of Keren and Asmara by General Baldissera in December 1889, General Orero captured Adowa in January 1890, and from the date of crossing the Mareb commenced the troubles of Italy in Abyssinia. They were perfectly capable of warding off any attack made by the rulers of Tigré, but not strong enough as regards finances to cope with a united Abyssinia. There is no doubt that if they had remained within the before-mentioned provinces, with the Mareb, Belessa, and Mai Muna rivers as a frontier, that their colony would have been a success, and they would have been saved all the miseries and expense they were hereafter put to.

In 1894 they commenced their disputes with Menelek, which arose over the interpretation of the Ucciali treaty, and after the seizure of Adowa it was patent to King Menelek that the Italians did not intend to be content with what they agreed to with him, and that they wanted the province of Tigré as well, and he soon found friends to help him in the French and Russians; the former wishing him to open up his country from their new port of Djibuti, which they took as their part of the division of the Egyptian coast line when Africa was cut up into spheres of influence; the English, who then occupied the village of Tadjourrah in the gulf of that name, marching their troops out from one side of the town while the French came in at the other.

The Russians, who claim to be of nearly the same religion as the Abyssinians, are trying to get a foothold in Africa by an alliance with Menelek, and they also tried to get a seaport or coaling station from him. King Menelek had no coast port to give away, as the coast line ceased to belong to Abyssinia many centuries ago. Their last outlet to the sea was at Adulis, the port for Abyssinia during the Axumite

dynasty, which they lost when the Mahomedan invasion took place. The late Russian game of bluff, landing at Roheita, did not succeed ; although it is possible for the French, if they wish to obtain further Russian aid, to let that nation in at either a small island on the coast near Perim or at Obock which used to be their headquarters, and then in time of war both nations would have a coaling station on our line of commerce to the East.

In 1894 Ras Mangesha, who was Prince of Tigré before his father's death at Gallabat, and had been confirmed in his governorate by the new ruler, complained to King Menelek of the intrigues of the Italians in Tigré, and that they would not retire from Adowa until their version of the treaty of Ucciali had been accepted, which entailed King Menelek's relations with all foreign powers passing through their hands. Ras Mangesha was commanded to visit King Menelek in Shoa to obtain instructions, and there received orders to return to his country and drive back the Italians over the Mareb river, and that aid should be sent him. Ras Aloula, who had also gone to King Menelek as he had had disputes with Ras Mangesha, remained behind at Adese Ababa and was treated with great honour by the king, notwithstanding he had commanded troops against him in King Johannes' time.

Ras Mangesha on his return from the capital crossed into Italian territory by a parallel road (that runs down the Mareb valley) to the Adigrat-Senafe route and met the Italians at Coatit in January 1895 under Generals Baratieri and Arimondi, where he was defeated after a very hard fought battle and retreated to Senafe and took up his quarters at the old English encampment, where a few days afterwards he was surprised, owing to his not holding the Cascasse pass, and again defeated, retiring into the province of Tigré.

The same year, after the rains were over, the Italians received further reinforcements from Italy and again advanced into Tigré. General Baratieri occupied Adowa and unwisely allowed his native soldiers to loot the town while the inhabitants were absent and were giving their submission to him, thereby making himself very unpopular. The Italians advanced to Tembien and Enderta provinces, and Ras Mangesha was again defeated at Debra Haila, but the attack on Ras Hagos' fort near Abbi Addi, in the province of Tembien, did not succeed. The Italians then occupied Macalle, where the late King Johannes had a very fine palace planned and built by an Italian, helped by skilled carpenters

and masons, and erected a very strong fort on the neighbouring hill of Edda Jesus, and also pushed forward a force to Amba Alagi, at the top of the pass that leads down to the Aschangi lake. The English expedition went past Amba Alagi, and one of their chief camps on the line of march to Magdala was at Antalo, within about an hour and a half's easy ride of Macalle. This ended the advance of the Italians, and at the end of 1895 it may be said that they had nearly the whole of the province of Tigré in their hands.

Menelek was now thoroughly alarmed, and immediately sent Ras Merconen with his well-armed troops from the Harar province to the aid of Ras Mangesha and the Tigréans. The Italian policy was never given to the public, so it can only be conjectured what their aim was by events that have taken place. Their first fault seems to have been in undertaking a campaign of such a magnitude with too small an army, and not spending enough money in subsidising the native minor chiefs of Tigré and arming their followers with modern rifles, so as to put them on an equal footing with the troops commanded by King Menelek and his generals; besides, up to this date the Italian policy in Erithrea had not been a success and the inhabitants of the north did not speak well of them, and they had failed to retain their native population by very many grave errors, and pursuing a purely military regime instead of one that would have kept the native on his property and have attracted others to come and settle in their colony, which was in 1895 absolutely in a worse state than it had ever been before.

In December Ras Merconen appeared unexpectedly with his army before Amba Alagi, and on the 2nd December a battle took place in which the Italians were entirely defeated and had to retreat on Macalle. On the 8th of the month an engagement took place at Macalle which was undecided and the Italians retired to their fortifications, which had a very strong garrison but badly provisioned. The rest of the Italian forces fell back on Adigrat, and Adowa was abandoned.

The siege of Macalle commenced on the 8th December 1895 and lasted until the 2nd January 1896, when it had to capitulate from starvation and thirst. Ras Menconen allowed the garrison to retire with all the honours of war and allowing them to keep their arms, and on the promise that the troops, which were mostly Abyssinians and natives of the north, should not fight again against Abyssinia. This promise was

also taken by the Italian officers, and the fact should be carefully noted as it explains what took place after the defeat at Adowa to the Abyssinian and Moslem troops in Italian pay.

The defence of Macalle was a gallant one, but when superior and longer ranged artillery is brought against a position, and the besiegers outnumber the defenders in the ratio of twenty to one, and the rifles employed by each are on an equality, the victory in the end must be with those who attack. On several occasions Ras Merconen's troops nearly succeeded in storming the Italian position and entrenchments, but he never could succeed in silencing the Italian artillery, as they were both armed with mountain batteries of about the same range, and his men were mown down before they could enter the works. Seeing that his loss was so severe and to persevere in carrying the position by assault did not warrant the further expenditure of life, he did what he ought to have done at first, waited for the first of the Hotchkiss quick-firing guns with a longer range that Menelek had procured from the French *via* Djibuti. These quick-firers were of a calibre of about two inches, firing both solid and percussion shell, and their range and accuracy were much superior to the muzzle-loading mountain guns of the Italians.

The Abyssinians have always made good artillerymen when instructed by foreigners; and their artillerymen at present have been taught by French and Russian officers at Adese Ababa, and were not inferior in experience to those of the Italians, who were also natives.

The position occupied by the Italians near Macalle was on the nearest hills above the town; the church of Edda Jesus is situated on the top of a hill divided by a small ridge of about 200 yards in length from another small flat-topped hill, on which is situated a small village of bullet-proof stone built houses. The ascent is most abrupt, and it is only possible to be scaled in two or three places, and the road up to it from Macalle is commanded by both hills; the position of the Italians was divided from that of the Abyssinians, which was on a slightly higher large open ridge of flat-topped hills, by a valley of about 500 feet in depth, and the distance between the two was from 800 to 1500 yards.

The water springs that the Italians depended on for their supplies were in a hollow beneath the church and the village, but out of sight of both their forts, and were commanded by

the Abyssinian position, so water could only be procured at night time. On the Abyssinians finding this out they silently occupied the springs in force during the night, and prevented the Italians from procuring sufficient for their troops, and then every bucketful had to be fought for. The Italians had nearly finished their provisions; they could obtain very little more from the town as it was invested; their position was swept by the enemy's quick-firers, so they could not show their heads above their fortifications; and the only thing left for them to do, as there was no chance of a relieving force coming from Adigrat or Erithrea, was to negotiate and make the best terms possible with Ras Merconen. This prince is a very able and enlightened man and had visited Italy, so gave the Italians much better terms than they had reason to expect.

I went over the Italian position several times while I was at Macalle, and although the fortifications had been razed by the conquerors, the church, houses and trees were still left standing, and they were all riddled by cannon ball and bullet, a proof of the strength and precision of the fire kept up on the place. The Italians made a great error when they chose their position, but at the same time they did not know that the Abyssinians were armed with quick-firing artillery, and their Intelligence Department seems to have been equally as ignorant as ours * has been in the present war, and troops were put to do work that was nearly impossible to achieve. Neglecting, however, to fortify and protect their water supply was unpardonable, and since their mishap, the water supplies at all their forts in Erithrea have been properly defended.

Early in 1896, the Italians had withdrawn over the Mareb, and on receiving reinforcements from Italy the army took up a position from Adigrat, which was fortified, to Adi Quala, *via* Entiscio, making use of the two roads *via* Senafe to Adigrat, and Asmara *via* Adi Ugri or Goodofelasie to Adi Quala. King Menelek was marching north when Macalle fell, with all the forces that he could get together, only leaving enough soldiers to garrison his country and leaving a corps of observation on the Danakil frontier to prevent any attack by the Danakils on his line of communications. He was accompanied by his wife, Queen Taitou, King Tchlaihaimanout of Godjam, Ras Michael of

* It will be very interesting to know whether the fault in this present war can be attributed to the Intelligence Department or not. Perhaps they gave correct information, and it was ignored as such has often been before.

the Wollo Gallas, his brother-in-law, Ras Wolie (a brother of Queen Taitou), the Waag-Choum Gangul of the Waag and Lasta provinces, and many others.

They advanced by two roads; the one *via* the province of Shoa, Wollo, Yejju, Aschangi, Macalle to Adowa; and the other *via* Godjam, Wadela, Lalibela, Sokota, Tembien, to Adowa.

Negotiations were entered into between Ras Merconen, on behalf of the king, and General Baratieri, on behalf of Italy, and before they were concluded the Italians very unwisely left their strong position round Entiscio on the last day of February to attack the Abyssinian position at Adowa. A battle was fought on the 1st March, when the Italians were entirely defeated. A full description of this fight will be found in another chapter.

The history of Abyssinia after the defeat of the Italians to the present day is only known to a very few, and even for those who wish to find out what is going on, their only source available is from an occasional blue-book or from an extract from some Italian, Russian or French newspaper. The blue-books are edited so as not to give any information, and the foreign press publications are generally one tissue of falsehoods. The little Italian newspaper published at Massowah gives as a rule interesting information about the colony, but hardly any details of what is going on in Abyssinia. Unless an interest is raised in a country and its modern history is put before the world, the public cannot come to any conclusion on the question, and I hope from the facts I give that my readers will be able to form their own opinions of what has been going on.

The return of King Menelek to his own dominions in the south after his victory over the Italians was no triumphant procession; his position was so insecure at Adowa that he did not go to the old sacred city of Axum to be crowned King of Kings as customary, and as all preceding monarchs that had the chance had done. This was a fatal mistake in the eyes of the northern population, and it leaves it open to any pretender strong enough to commence a partly successful rebellion, and getting a priest from the Coptic Monastery of Alexandria as an Abouna or Chief Priest to crown him at Axum and to excommunicate the present ruler, to get many followers and to give him as good a right to rule over the northern people as Menelek has at the present moment. This is what Prince Kassai did before he became King

Johannes, and although his predecessor King Theodore was crowned at Derezge in the Semien province, he afterwards did what was equivalent and visited and prayed at the sacred church at Axum.

The direct succession and claiming descent from such and such a ruler in Abyssinia goes for little, and it is the sword by which the country is ruled. No one knew it better than King Johannes, who scorned to have a pedigree made out tracing his descent to some old king as Theodore did, and won his way by the sword, and kept his position by his merits and by good government.

The brunt of the fighting round Adowa had been borne by the northern cultivators, and they have been the greatest sufferers in the last war and in the defence of their country against the numerous invaders. They were also pillaged by Menelek's soldiers from the south and much worse treated by them than by the Italians, so there is no love lost between north and south. Many of the peasantry had procured rifles and large stocks of cartridges from the reserve ammunition which was taken on the battle-field of Adowa and at Entiscio, and they and the townspeople combined together to defend their property from Menelek's Amhara and Galla soldiery. The return south was one incessant skirmish between the cultivators and the strangers. The Azebu, Gallas, Taltals, and other tribesmen that inhabit the country to the east from near Adigrat to the Yejju province, lined the road as far as the province of Yejju, and plundered the transport and murdered all stragglers, and a strong expedition sent by King Menelek to levy tribute in the Azebu country met with a severe defeat, and returned without the supplies that were required to feed the famished army. The Abyssinian southern army, on their march home along the eastern road, lost more men in killed and wounded than they had done on the field of battle at Adowa.

The army that marched along the western road, being composed mostly of Amharans and the inhabitants of Godjam, Waag and Lasta, were not molested, as they passed through a friendly country. I was at Adowa before another crop had ripened, and although grain was a trifle dearer than in ordinary times, it was fairly cheap throughout the whole district, proving that the natives had defended their stores, and that if the king had purchased supplies instead of trying to take them by force, his troops would not have suffered in the way they did on their return.

After his northern campaign the king returned to Adese Ababa, and immediately sent off a further expedition to the south-west to annex more of the Galla countries and extend his frontier towards the watershed of the Sobat river and towards the highlands to the north of lakes Rudolph and Stephanie.

The country, after the battle of Adowa, was governed by the following rulers. The frontier general in the north was Ras Aloula, who was generally moving between Axum, Adowa and Adigrat, and was constructing a new stronghold at Hassena, about six miles north from Axum, commanding the road that runs from there through the Lala plain to the ford over the Mareb river. His command was nearly independent of Ras Mangesha. King Menelek had left an agent at Axum to report to him direct what was going on in the north, as he never could implicitly trust Ras Mangesha, who was governor of the Tigréan provinces with Ras Hagos of Tembien as second in command. To have more hold over Ras Mangesha he had made him divorce his wife and marry a daughter of Ras Wolie, a niece, therefore, of his Queen Taitou.

Waag-Choum Gangul was chief of the fertile mountainous province of Waag and part of Lasta ; the other portion of Lasta being governed along with the province of Yejju by Ras Wolie, the king's brother-in-law. Ras Michael, an adopted son of King Johannes and one of the first to acknowledge King Menelek, was governor of the whole of the Wollo country, including the Magdala district ; and King Tchlaihaimanout, who was made a king by Johannes, governed Godjam and Begemeder. The Semien province was ruled by a representative of Queen Taitou. King Menelek looked after Ifat, Shoa, the Galla country, and directed the new annexations to the west and south, and his nephew, Ras Merconen, governed the last acquisition of the kingdom, the Harar province, where Abyssinia is brought more into contact with Europeans than in any other part, and where all the trade of southern Abyssinia passes through.

The moment King Menelek quarrelled with the Italians and saw that there was nothing more to be got out of them, he commenced his great friendship with the French, who were not slow to do everything they possibly could to secure a position in his councils, and pose as his disinterested advisers. There can be no doubt that had it not been for the French supplying Abyssinia through the port of Djibuti with unlimited quantities of arms and ammunition, both as presents

and by purchase from their merchants, that Menelek would never have been able to have gained the crushing victory of Adowa. For this help and services rendered the French have won their position, and with tact they are likely to be able to procure everything they wish in the country, and most likely run their own candidate for the throne on the death of King Menelek.

The present monarch was first heard of when he was a prisoner at Magdala before the English expedition; he had then been away from his country for about ten years, living mostly at Magdala, but not treated badly by King Theodore. About the time when Consul Cameron was imprisoned he made his escape and got back to Ankobar in Shoa and became king of that country, his father having ruled Shoa before him. He opened communications with the English at Aden in 1867, but did not help the officials in any way by getting information from the captives; nor did he do anything more in 1868, although he had then been on the throne more than three years, except to write letters to Lord Napier, and made the usual excuses, saying that want of food, etc., prevented him coming to the aid of the English.

We hear very little from Shoa for some time after this date, and what little information came from there was mostly through the missionaries, who then seem to have had rather a free hand in the country and allowed to do what they liked. They have left nothing very lasting behind them, and instead of trying to improve the Christian religion already existing in Shoa, tried to convert the inhabitants to their own way of thinking. When missionaries of different sects get into a country they always start in opposition to each other, and their petty jealousies and want of accord does far more harm than good. The Roman Catholic considers his teaching the only one and looks upon the Baptists, the Church of England, Swedish, and other missions as little better than a pack of heretics, and the Abyssinian form of Christianity as perhaps worse than all. King Johannes would have none of them, and considered his own priests quarrelled enough among themselves without having other forms of worship imported to make a worse confusion.

King Menelek only encouraged them as an advertisement, and that they were useful in procuring information and keeping him in touch with the outside world.

The French are the only nation that have missions there at the present moment. His professions to the English Anti-

Slavery Society were not sincere, and the only good he has done in this business is to forbid slavery in an open manner, that is, driving slave caravans through the country; but his proclamation seems to have done little good, as Galla slaves in large numbers are still to be purchased in the Yemen and the Hedjaz, and the French do not bother themselves to put down the trade, which passes through their dominions, although they well know who the slave dealers are and that they carry the slaves across the Red Sea in boats flying the French flag.

In 1886 King Menelek had to send away the missionaries that were working in his country by order of King Johannes, and although the latter has been dead for ten years, no other missions have started in Abyssinia with the exception of the Roman Catholics, who have always been more of a French political institution than a purely missionary establishment. The less said about the Roman Catholic Abyssinian convert the better. The chief reason why Menelek at first welcomed some of the foreign missionaries was that they knew trades and that they were useful in teaching his subjects to become good blacksmiths, carpenters, masons and bricklayers. Now that he can procure as many Indian artisans of all sorts as he likes from Bombay *via* Aden, or Arabs from that port, he does not want the missionary as he is more trouble than he is worth; and what with the French merchants who will supply him with everything he requires, as long as he has the money to purchase it, or concessions to give away, he has no more need of other foreigners.

The Italians might have been the paramount power in Abyssinia had they not quarrelled with the present king. They were his largest territorial neighbours, except the Dervishes, and they had a long start of every one in negotiations with him and stood in the premier position among strangers. After they had occupied the Hamasen province, which Menelek did not so much care about, they could have opened up Abyssinia both from the north through Massowah and south from Assab through the Danakil and Aussa countries, and followed the well-watered Hawash road to Ifat, Ancober and the Wollo Galla country. Another road from Assab that they never tried to exploit properly, was that to Yejju, one of the richest of all the districts and where caravans of camels arrive from the low country, showing therefore an easy gradient and a road that could be used for commercial purposes.

Their policy was marked by many faults, and their forward movement into Tigré was altogether premature and has made their African colonisation most unpopular in Italy, by the reason of so many thousands of families having to mourn the loss of their relations and friends killed in the country. Their pluck in completely altering their warlike policy, and starting one which is now based on conciliation and commerce and remaining in the country, cannot but be admired by every one who has studied the subject, and also by those who wish to see a friendly European neighbour imbued with the same spirit as ourselves marching hand in hand with us, and opening up for the first time and perhaps for ever this part of Africa to the blessings of civilisation under a just and stable government.

It has been remarked to me on several occasions by Italian officers who have played a leading part in Abyssinian politics, that King Menelek really wished to quarrel with Italy the moment he considered himself strong enough to do so, and that instead of his being unprepared for the Italian invasion of Tigré, he had everything ready to oppose it. This is a point I cannot enter into, as I do not think there is enough evidence to support it, and I consider on the other hand that, despite King Menelek's life of intriguing and looking out after number one, that the Italians brought everything on themselves, as their undoubted aid in winning for him the throne of united Abyssinia did not warrant their further attempted annexations, and it was only natural for the king to protect himself and to accept aid from the French and Russians. He is also just as capable of breaking with them when he finds no more use for them, as he was with the Italians, or with the English, should occasion offer after they have made friends with him.

The position of Italy and France are not the same; the latter has only one road into the interior, by which it would be nearly impossible to invade the country, and therefore her policy must be one of peace and commerce until the railway she is making is finished, and her councils become accepted by the upper classes, and her popularity so great with the lower classes that she will be able perhaps to influence the present ruler to name one of her many Abyssinian friends as successor to the throne. Italy is in a position at any time to do harm to Abyssinia by fomenting revolts among the Tigréans, Amharans, and the tribesmen that inhabit the eastern frontier; so without France and Russia's friendship and the open trad-

ing door through Djibuti, from where he can draw his arms and ammunition, Menelek's position without an ally would neither be a safe nor a strong one.

It was only after the defeat of the Italians at Adowa and while he had their prisoners as hostages in the country that the attention of Europe was drawn to King Menelek, and the ordinary public only knew of Abyssinia as a country somewhere in Africa where England sent an expedition to, to relieve some Englishmen who had been captured. The moment the news arrived in Europe of the Italian defeat, there was an undignified rush among some of the leading powers to enter into negotiations with the ruler of Abyssinia. The French were second in the field with a diplomatic mission; I met it going up, headed by Monsieur Lagarde, the governor of Djibuti, in the month of January 1897, on my return to the coast from Adese-Ababa, between Guraslee and Debbas, in the country of the White Esa Somalis. At that town there was a nominally Russian Red Cross Mission, but really a political one, under military officers already at work, and who had charge of the wounded that were brought back from the northern campaign. A regular hospital had been established by the Russian Government, giving aid gratis to the sick and wounded, and was doing excellent work; the king often visiting the place and taking the keenest interest in the operations performed. Previously to meeting the French Mission, I had come across other Russian officers at Burca, between Harar and the capital; they were accompanied by Abyssinians, priests and laymen, on their return from the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Preparations were also being made at Djibuti for the joint mission of Prince Henry of Orleans and Count Leonitieff, the Russian, to visit the king. A Spanish Roman Catholic Mission was also at Adese-Ababo, combining religion on behalf of the Pope and diplomacy. Last of all was the large English Mission under Mr Rennell Rodd, now Sir James Rennell Rodd, which left in the spring of 1897, and after remaining a few days at Adese-Ababa, returned to the coast with a treaty as per Appendix No. IV.

It was not until 1898 that the English Government appointed Captain Harrington as Her Majesty's Resident at Adese-Ababa, where he arrived in April, and between the time of the English Mission in 1897 and his arrival, a period of ten months, the French and Russians had the whole time to make all their plans for helping Menelek in his annexations towards the Nile valley and the Equatorial provinces.

It was after Khartoum was retaken and the Khalifa's power was broken in 1898 that England commenced to be the neighbours of Abyssinia on the Soudan side. The Indian Government had had dealings with the Abyssinians since 1884, when Harar and the seaports of Tadjurrah, Zeilah, Bulhar, and Berberah fell to the English after the abandonment of this country by the Egyptian Government.

The present position of affairs between Abyssinia, Italy, and England is as follows, and the whole policy is now being directed by the English Foreign Office, so there is a chance of getting something done; they having also taken over from the Indian Government the management of the Somali country from the 1st January 1899, so now the two offices have not to be dealt with. Abyssinia is now surrounded by Italy and England, with the exception of the small undefined hinterland at the back of the French territory, which reaches from close to Raheita to about a line equi-distant between the English seaport of Zeilah and the comparatively new French coaling station of Djibuti. The whole frontier, with the exception of the northern part of the country between Italy and Abyssinia, is entirely undefined, and east and west of the Mareb, Belessa, and Mai Muna rivers, nothing is as yet known of the boundary. The frontier commencing south and east of the Mai Muna is not laid down by Italy and Abyssinia, nor is the hinterland of the French or Italians marked off, but an understanding has lately been come to between Italy and France regarding their dividing line. The division between the south of the French possessions and England is arranged, and by our treaty with King Menelek made in 1897, the division between the two countries is also determined by the most absurd arrangement of latitude and longitude, instead of by properly marked geographical boundaries, mountains, rivers or plains, or what is better still, by tribal boundaries.

Either geographical or territorial boundaries can be understood by both parties, and they are the only means by which a proper agreement can ever be arrived at. The very fact of making use of the mathematical divisions of latitude and longitude, stamps in the most marked manner the ignorance of the country which is being dealt with, and the common-sense way in which divisions between two territories should be decided. No native, not even King Menelek, understands what the invisible lines used by our diplomats to hang treaties on are. I passed through the Somali

country in 1898, and on both sides of this invisible line that has been laid down as a boundary, complaints of the arrangements were most rife, and it was impossible to make the natives understand why such arrangements are entered into. Of course those that make them do not have to live in the country they are dealing with, and I can fancy I hear their heartfelt thanks that they do not. It means to those that do, that they have to carry out instructions against their own better feelings, and carry out unjust agreements that make the subjects that they govern not only discontented but very often rebellious. These lines cut tribes into two nationalities, and as they are mostly shepherds and followers of the grass, they have to pay tribute to both countries; or when agricultural land is in point, their houses may be under one government and the majority of their fields under another, entailing double taxation and a dual responsibility.

The Somali, under British rule, administered by capable and intelligent officers, is really the most harmless person that exists as long as he is fairly treated, and he is the reverse when under an incapable administrator. Partly putting him under Abyssinia, which our present treaty does, is a grave error for many reasons. There was no necessity why we should have given any of Somaliland to Abyssinia, and if in future giving up other people's lands to Menelek along the frontier which has to be arranged is to continue, we shall be looked upon as unjust, and shall lose our present prestige for justice with the natives on both sides of the borders. There can be no doubt that when first dealing with the African native that firmness and fairness makes a lasting impression, and once they see that you intend dealing honestly with them, and that at the same time you do not intend to be imposed upon, that they can be led anywhere, but driven nowhere. For this reason alone the frontier question ought not to be hurried on, and as few of the lowlanders as possible should be allowed to be under Abyssinian rule. The Abyssinians can do nothing for the future of these wild Mahomedans and pagans, while under English protection they will become useful subjects and good allies. What has been done hitherto with Menelek, is giving him land (and its owners) which does not belong to us, and this shows a policy that contains no trace of firmness, and absolutely no fairness, so it is to be hoped that it will not be repeated.

The hinterland of the Italian Somali country is not yet settled with Abyssinia, nor is any part of our southern

boundary *vis-à-vis* to, but far away north of, the Mombassa-Uganda railway. On the whole of the west frontier the line of demarcation is still undefined, and it is to be trusted that the Abyssinian influence on that side will be confined to the highlands with its Christian population, and leave to England the whole of the Mahomedan element, and all those tribes that have as yet not made up their minds what religion they will adopt.

From what the French have persuaded Menelek to do with the Equatorial provinces that he claims and the Sobat valley, there may be some difficulty in defining and coming to a satisfactory agreement together in this region. I do not believe for one instant that it was Menelek's idea to increase his territory so fast in that direction, but he acted entirely to please the French, and to show his gratitude to them for their help against the Italians. The French had their own policy to carry out, and it was only through a series of blunders that it did not succeed; little was known of the French expeditions towards the Nile valley that were fitted out after the English Mission left Adese-Ababa, and while we were unrepresented there. We know now, however, that they failed mainly owing to the death of one leader and the ill-health of another. Had they succeeded, the French at Djibuti would have joined hands with Marchand from the Atlantic at Fashoda, making a chain of posts across the continent, and dividing our northern and southern spheres of influence in Africa. Had the expeditions from the east been as successful as from the west, Abyssinia and Menelek's influence would have been doubly valuable to them and more important than it is now, and there was every possibility that the Fashoda incident might not have ended in the pacific manner that it did.

England is still in the dark as to where Menelek's territorial influence to the west extends, and how much he has compromised himself with France will perhaps never be known until some dispute arises between them. It is known that he has given French subjects, including Monsieur Lagarde, the French Minister, grants of land, and Monsieur Lagarde has also received from him the title of Duke of Entotto, the name of the old capital of Shoa. Supposing no dispute arose with the present king, diplomatic questions might arise over these grants of land and concessions with his successor, and the French Government might take the part of their subjects and make it a cause of interference in the affairs of

Abyssinia, the same as they have done in Siam and Madagascar. There are records in history of a country interfering with another on much less pretext than this would afford.

The mode that France employs in her annexations and claims on territory is so well known, that it is not likely that her new coaling station at Djibuti is only to be used for purely commercial purposes and to supply fuel to the Messagerie Maritime Coy. and her men-of-war. The lesson she has taught us already with her dealings with the natives ought to be taken seriously to heart by every one interested in the welfare of Africa. It is already well known to every one visiting the country that she has already allowed the Abyssinians to arm to such an extent that they have become by far the strongest native power in Africa, and one that would, if unfriendly to her neighbours, severely tax the resources of most first-class European powers in men and money before a lesson could be given to the ruling classes, and placing them in their proper position so that they cannot keep the masses in their present unhappy state. The question of the supply of arms to Abyssinia is not the only one. All the tribesmen of East Africa can enjoy the same facilities in arming themselves as the Abyssinians. England does not allow her native subjects to procure firearms of any description, and we do not protect them from lawless raids on account of the expense it would entail in keeping garrisons up country far away from our base at the sea coast. The Somalis, so as to be on an equality with those that they come in contact with in their commercial travels in the interior, are driven to procure anything they require in the shape of guns and ammunition to defend themselves with from Djibuti. It is all very well ignoring the question, but both the Italians in their sphere of influence, and England in hers, are at present face to face with this very complicated question. I have no fear that either Italy or England will not be able, as far as their subjects are concerned, to maintain order, as we are both governing by peaceful and popular means, but unless we protect our subjects or put them on the same footing as those they come into contact with, we must be prepared for discontent and perhaps great trouble.

The traffic in arms allowed by the French at Djibuti is not confined unfortunately to the African side; there is an uninterrupted contraband trade existing from all places on the French Somali and Danakil coast with the Yemen, Hadramut, and Hedjaz littorals, and the people who carry on

the contraband trade between these countries are nearly all slave dealers. They are of course as well known to the French as to the Turkish authorities, who are only too willing to shield them as they are a source of private revenue to them in many ways, and they take from them whenever they require a small boy as a servant, or a black, or a pretty Galla girl for their harems, for which no payment is asked. What does a Turkish official in the Hedjaz or the Yemen care about Constantinople and its treaties with Christian powers for the suppression of the slave trade or illicit traffic? He leaves Turkey to enrich himself; his pay to commence with is insufficient and he is often months upon months in arrears, and he of course tries to make as much money as he possibly can in the shortest space of time; and slaves are the most valuable and portable property, as they can always be privately sold or given away, or sent beforehand to his protector in Constantinople as presents, or taken with him on his return to his country.

The slave dealer starts away from the French coast in a native sailing-craft, making up his cargo with a little ivory, some rifles and cartridges, and a good supply of tobacco, mostly of the Indian and Persian kind used by the natives in their water pipes. There is a Turkish Government monopoly of tobacco in their dominions, so its price is high and the profit large. The boat, which will be flying the French flag, is safe from search by the revenue cruisers belonging to the Turkish Regie. It will anchor at some convenient spot on the coast, some way from any Government post, where natives with camels are waiting for the consignment, and the cargo is quickly discharged and taken into the interior. The boat then returns with coffee and mother-o'-pearl shells, which also have paid no duty to the Turkish officials, to the French coast for a further cargo. This trade has been going on for a long time and it cannot be put a stop to, as neither Turkey, Italy, or England have the right of search under the French flag. The consequence is, not only the Bedouins of the coast, but the Arabs of the interior have discarded their old long picturesque and highly ornamented flint and matchlock guns, and are now armed with fairly modern breech-loading rifles of precision. The Turks have already been beaten in several minor engagements in Yemen lately, and the Arabs have become more than a match for the small military force in the country. It is not the thin edge of the wedge that has been driven in by the French from Djibuti,

but a very stout one, and the position of the Turk in the Yemen and the Hedjaz is already one of great danger, as when once the Bedouin is well armed and finds himself on an equality in arms with the Turk, he will not keep quiet; and the present state of Turkish finance will not allow them to send many reinforcements, or to undertake a long campaign for the reconquest of these two countries.

The English, or more strictly speaking the Indian Government, cannot look on what is going on with impunity, and action must be taken shortly to either arm our subjects round Aden, so as to enable the chiefs of tribes friendly to us in southern Arabia to maintain their position on their borders, or keep a larger native force in English pay to patrol the desert roads to prevent the importation of arms into our sphere of influence between Aden and Muscat. I made a little expedition last year into the interior from Aden, so as to be present at the time of a large Arab festival, where tribesmen come from all parts of the adjacent country, and saw quite enough of the effects of the Djibuti contraband trade, as many Arabs were armed with breech-loaders and belts of cartridges that they had purchased from traders from the opposite coast that had run the arms through, outside the jurisdiction of the Aden authorities. I consider that our friendly chiefs in Arabia and Somaliland are at a great disadvantage. They are faithful, obedient and true to the authorities at present, but the question becomes, how long will their influence last when their subjects and those that they have to keep in order on the borders are better armed than they are.

Disputes might commence very easily at any moment by minor chiefs revolting against their superiors, and those to whom the Aden authorities look for protection for supplies reaching Aden by the roads from the interior might not be able to enforce their authority, owing to their followers not being properly armed. Certainly it struck me at the time that our friendly Sultan of Lahej was not in a position to enforce order, or to prevent the well-armed Arabs that were present at the gathering from doing what they pleased; and if in this case, why not in others as well. Aden is a place, as every one knows, of first-class importance, not only in a naval and military point of view, but commercial as well. The military and commercial elements are now most wisely well separated, and in time of a maritime war would be more so, as the non-combatants would most likely have to leave the

fortified part of the settlement and retire to the mainland. But still the commercial element is so mixed up with the official that the utility of Aden as a coaling and victualling station depends a good deal on whether the interior is in a peaceful or warlike state, and labour and fresh supplies can be procured from there. Any outbreak against the English Government in the environs would be most eagerly followed both in Somaliland and Abyssinia, and also all round the Abyssinian frontier, and disturbances in the country might be fermented by a maritime power with which we were at war.

The supplies for the Aden garrison and for the civilian population came partly from the interior of Arabia and partly from the Somali coast and the Abyssinian frontier, and the trade of Aden is mostly done with these places; with disturbances amongst the local tribes the trade would be put a stop to, and the supplies of all sorts would cease, and Aden would have to depend for her food supplies from India for the garrison, civil population, and the shipping that visits this port.

The welfare of Aden and its prosperity plays a more important part in the East than what the general public are aware of. It is not only for its importance as a distributing centre for trade, and as a coaling station for which it is famed, but for its just government and as an oasis of law and order in the centre of a large expanse of country reaching from Europe to India, and including the whole of Arabia and the eastern half of Africa from the Mediterranean to the Cape of Good Hope, and for many years it was the only place along the whole of this route where justice could not be bought or sold. All the Moslems from the East either pass or stop at it on their way to Mecca to perform their pilgrimage; its fame is therefore well known to the Eastern and African Mahomedan world, and to the many traders from these countries who visit it to obtain their supplies and get rid of their produce. Any signs of weakness on England's part in her administration there would be immediately known and the common topic of conversation at the native coffee shops in many lands where we are now looked up to and govern more by our prestige than by any force of arms.

Thus the question of the exportation of war-like stores from Djibuti and strengthening the hands of our friendly sheiks both in Arabia and Somaliland to counteract what is being done by the French becomes a most important one to

us, as we cannot look with indifference at the policy pursued by France at Djibuti of the indiscriminate sale of arms to all natives, no matter what tribe, who have the money to purchase them. It is already a great source of danger, and is likely to lead to grave complications in our administration of the semi-savage natives in the neighbourhood. These are facts, not fictions, that not only we but the Italians have to fear, and is what is actually taking place now on a large scale, and not one of the things that might be; they may be called pin pricks on behalf of the French, but the whole of their management at Djibuti is one that has a most prejudicial effect on the natives, and is no doubt done to weaken the power of England at Aden and in Africa, and that of Turkey in Arabia and Italy in Erithrea.

There is no doubt that, as far as the Aden side is concerned, the present administrator, General Creagh, V.C., if allowed a free hand and more money from the English Treasury, as it is an Imperial question and not an Indian one, will be able to keep the sheiks and their followers friendly; but the danger is more on the opposite coast in the Somali country now being administered by Colonel Hayes Sadler, and it will certainly extend to the Soudan frontiers in time, as the slave dealers still exist and they will be able to supply arms and ammunition to their friends in that country, and it will therefore increase the difficulties of administering the whole of the north-east portion of Africa in a peaceful manner. Trying to catch the slave dealers in a big country like the Soudan was nearly impossible in the time of the late General Gordon, with all the facilities he had at his disposal and when the country was at peace. I know the feelings about the Slave Trade question at home, and all my many years' personal experience teaches me that we shall never be able to put it down until slave raiding ceases to exist to supply the demand; the demand will never cease until the Turkish official becomes honest; the latter we can never hope for, not even when Constantinople passes into other hands, and slave raiding will only be put a stop to when the centre of Africa is blessed by a European government.

There is no reason, however, why we should allow slavery to continue in our sphere of influence as we do at present; there need not be any Act of Abolition and no compensation need be given, nor is any proclamation required; but the word slave is not to be recognised in any of our courts of law, and any one appearing at these courts stands upon an equality.

Slaves then have a civil right to claim for wages from their masters, and the case would be settled between man and man; the consequence would be that the master would pay his slave, if he was worth anything, a wage so as to keep him out of court, otherwise he would let him go. Because a man has done a dishonest action by buying a fellow human being, he ought not to be compensated by any government or any tax payer because what he has bought turns out a bad bargain; and the man who buys a human being is equally as guilty as the man who supplies him with the article; every crime against humanity and every law that binds society together is perpetrated and broken in the slave trade, and as it is the wish of every honest person who studies the question that an end should once and for all be put to this horrible traffic, the permanent officials who can and will not put an end to it should be made to do their duty. It is useless for them to say it would bring on grave questions and local disturbances which might be avoided; the only possibility is some little demonstration by which the life of one or two of our resident officials might be sacrificed, and their death in a good cause would not be so much felt as there are plenty of others to fill their places, and they would die doing their duty and their name would be remembered long after and more so than if they merely died of old age in their beds.

At present in the south of Abyssinia a slave owner can claim his slave and the authorities return it to him; thereby setting an example to slave dealers that exists in no other part of our protectorates, and proving to the Arab that we are not sincere and are not of the same way of thinking, and that they can get rid of their slaves legally in one part of our dominions and not in another. I mention this simply to show it is impossible for us if we are to be considered honest to allow such an anomaly to continue, and what a hand it gives to the French at Djibuti to go on with the selling of arms to the slave dealers who are allowed to pass through French territory and take their slaves away to Arabia or elsewhere under the French flag.

The slave dealers in the French dominions do supply arms to the slave raiders who supplied arms to the Khalifa and to other outlaws in the Soudan, and these men pass through Abyssinia. At present King Menelek does not put a stop to the trade, but only says it is not to go on, a very different thing. On my journey up to Adese-Ababa in 1898 I met a great number of slaves returning with the soldiers (prisoners

of war they were called) who had made the expedition to the Shangalla country with Ras Merconen, and they were being driven along the public road, some of them in chains; their destination was Harar and its neighbourhood; those that the soldiers did not require as servants would ultimately be sold to the buyers in the French dominions and be exported to Arabia..

If influence can be brought to bear upon King Menelek to put a stop to arms and slaves passing through his country, it will greatly strengthen the position of our authorities in the equatorial provinces and the southern Soudan, and make the pacification and development of these countries a much easier task; but I have grave doubts that he will do so; promises with him go for nothing, and I hardly believe he will do anything to the detriment of the trade through the French sphere of influence to please our representative at Adese-Ababa. Every slave raid that takes place in our sphere of influence in Africa is a dead loss to the very thinly populated country, as at present there are not enough inhabitants to till the ground to make it worth while for Europeans to settle to purchase the natural produce of the country or to barter Manchester cloth in return. Every native now is of value and should be looked upon as a unit that will increase and take its place in the coming prosperity that will follow in the footsteps of an enlightened and just rule; and the moment that the Arabs see that there is no market for their fellow-creatures they will remain quiet, and this will not necessitate so many troops and such large and numerous garrisons being kept up.

It will be remembered that before Mahdism broke that the country south of Fashoda to the Albert Nyanza lake was governed by Emin Pasha and Lupton Bey, an Englishman, and in their provinces slavery might be said to have been non-existent except in a domestic form which does little harm and no one but a fanatic wants to interfere with, as domestic slaves are generally well-treated. The slave raiders had quitted the country and gone off to Darfur, Kordofan, and the Sennaar provinces, and from these men the Mahdi at first obtained most of his followers. There are two places in the Soudan where these slave traders are still to be found, namely, in Darfur and at and above Famaka on the Blue Nile. There is a brisk trade between Famaka and Shoa in southern Abyssinia, which I daresay has greatly increased now the Egyptian garrisons block the lower waters of the Nile

and the road to Kassala, and prevent slave caravans using the north-eastern roads. I shall believe that the Abyssinian officials are sincere in their wish to put a stop to the slave trade and the traffic in arms through their country when they make captures of the dealers and their slaves but not before ; as whatever the king may put on paper with England, it does not follow that it will be carried out, and the profits of the trade are so great that those who carry it on can afford to pay very heavy presents to allow their caravans to pass.

There can be no doubt that French influence is paramount in Abyssinia at present, and that they are entirely opposed to the development of the country by any one but themselves, and that they will throw every diplomatic obstacle in the way of King Menelek making friends with those who really have the interests of Abyssinia at heart, and wish to open up the country. The French already possess the telephones and the postal arrangements ; telegraphs are to be made, and a railway from Djibuti to Adese-Ababa is being constructed. Besides local telephones at Harar and Adese-Ababa, these two towns, which are about 270 miles apart, are joined by a flimsy and badly-made line which took fifteen months to put up, and is always breaking from some cause or another ; white ants eating the poles ; gales of wind on the storm-swept downs, thunder storms and the lightning shattering the poles ; monkeys swinging on the wires or the natives cutting them for pure mischief, or for the reason that they do not approve of what they are pleased to term "devil's business." The telegraph lines are to be constructed from Adese-Ababa to all the principal towns in the different provinces, so daily reports can be received from all parts of the kingdom.

The railway, which is nearly entirely a French concern, is making but slow progress from the coast. In November 1898, about eighteen miles had been made in about a year out of the 500 miles required to join up Djibuti with Harar and Adese-Ababa. The post, which is very unsafe and no one can trust, runs weekly from the coast to Harar, and from there is sent on to Adese-Ababa. Post-cards and stamps are sold, some bearing the king's head, others the Lion of Judah ; they have been made in France and the chief postal officials are Frenchmen, who invariably like seeing the contents of the letters that pass through their hands, as they take the most lively interest in the correspondence of foreigners that pay visits to the country.

The silver coinage that is trying to be forced on the

population with as yet little success is being coined in France. It consists of a silver coin of the size of an Indian two-anna piece, and a silver dollar, with other coins of a half, quarter, and an eighth of a dollar in value. The silver dollar is supposed to be the equivalent of five francs. The coinage has been paid for out of the Italian war indemnity of 10,000,000 liras which was paid in instalments, the last being paid in the autumn of 1898 and was collected by a Frenchman.

The majority of King Menelek's produce, such as ivory, coffee, bees-wax and musk, of which he takes the tenth part of what is produced in the country, is also nearly all handed over to French subjects to dispose of; and from these marks of confidence that the King has in the French, it is useless supposing that the subjects of any other country will now be able to participate in any schemes for the opening up of Abyssinia from the sea coast. The commercial development of Abyssinia by France dates from the winter of 1896-97, before the fall of the Khalifa's power in the Soudan, and when French intrigues were rife with regard to the Nile valley, and which only received their death-blow at the fall of Omduraman and the occupation of Fashoda and the Sobat river in 1898. I think there can be little doubt that if the fall of Omduraman had taken place six months later, when Fashoda had been reached it would have been found that French posts had already been established at convenient distances along the route from Berta to Fashoda, or from Wallega to Nasser on the Sobat river. The provinces of Berta and Wallega are both claimed by King Menelek, and it was only after the battle of Adowa that the Abyssinians, no doubt at French instigation, pushed forward their conquests towards the Nile valley and occupied these places.

The campaign towards the western borders of Abyssinia was intrusted by King Menelek to by far the cleverest and most enlightened man that the country possesses, namely Ras Merconen, and he absolutely had no fighting with the Dervishes, except what was occasioned by his troops when plundering the villages and enslaving the Shangallas. On his return from the Berta province and the country bordering the Blue Nile, he was accompanied by many Dervishes whom he was supposed to have taken prisoners. I saw these men walking about in the Khalifa's uniform at Adese-Ababa after the English resident, Captain Harrington, had left for the coast, and they received presents from the king and returned

to their country in the month of July 1898, and it was not till September of that year that Omduraman was taken. That Dervish emissaries visited southern Abyssinia frequently was known to all the inhabitants, and although, as I said before, attacks by the Dervishes on Abyssinia were frequent up to the time of the death of King Johannes, none took place afterwards, that is for a period of nine and a half years, or from March 1889 till September 1898; the only deduction that can be drawn from this is that the Khalifa and the king had come to some understanding together, but the nature of it can only be a matter for conjecture.

Monsieur Carrere, the French officer who had instructed the Abyssinians in the use of the Hotchkiss guns employed in the campaign against the Italians at Macalle and Adowa, and who accompanied the king to that place, met his death on an expedition towards the Nile which started from southern Abyssinia. Another French officer with a second expedition towards that district had to return through sickness. These two expeditions left before those commanded by Ras Merconen and Dedjatch Tessema. The force belonging to the latter general went to the Sobat, and it is, I believe, still somewhere to the west of Kaffa or in that province.

Great preparations were made for a large expedition under joint French and Russian leaders to occupy territory to the south, south-west and west of Abyssinia. The chief leaders were Prince Henry of Orleans and Count Leonitieff, a Russian; they arrived in Abyssinia in the summer of 1898 accompanied with several French officers and a force of considerably over a hundred Senegalese sharpshooters. Their equipment left nothing to be desired, as they had with them everything that could possibly be wanted, and quantities of the most modern breech-loaders and several machine guns. The departure of this expedition from Harar in 1898 was prevented by an accident to Count Leonitieff which took place on the 1st of June; he had been explaining the working of a Maxim gun to some Abyssinian officers, and while he was standing in front of it someone fired it and he was shot through both legs. He, together with Prince Henry, returned to Europe, and what the expedition and the French officers are now doing it is not known. Elephant hunting for ivory was to be one of the sources of profit, and the Count had any quantity of rifles of the largest calibre which he gave to the Senegalese soldiers for this purpose.

These men were under very bad discipline, and on several occasions, much to my disgust, I saw them patting their officers on the back and addressing them in the second person ; these and other familiarities of a much worse description were not resented. Although M. Ilg, a Swiss gentleman, King Menelek's European adviser, denies, I believe, that Count Leonitieff and Prince Henry of Orleans have been given any territory by the king towards the Equatorial provinces, they have given out publicly that they have received grants of land in that direction which embraces not only territory in the English sphere of interest or influence, but also that claimed by Italy at the back of their Somali coast line. It is not likely that these foreigners, whose hatred to the English and English nation is so well known, and who have always openly disputed English rights in this part of Africa, would go to the expense of getting together a very powerful expedition and supply it with every modern arm, and drill Abyssinian recruits and put them under French Senegalese non-commissioned officers, unless they had something more definite than a verbal promise from an African potentate. Supposing that their expedition leaves for some point in the south, south-east or south-west of Abyssinia which is not at present recognised as Abyssinian territory, diplomatic remonstrances would not, perhaps, be sufficient to remove them, and it would be a costly undertaking to dispatch a sufficient force to eject them, and King Menelek, backed up by France and Russia, might not value the friendship of England at such a price as to order them to come back.

The present position is fraught with danger and perhaps with many unseen possibilities of a disagreeable nature, and if our rule in the Soudan and on the borders of Abyssinia is to be a success it must be based on a peaceful settlement of the whole question, which will necessitate small garrisons and therefore a moderate military expenditure ; as long as these are possible there is a future for the Soudan and Abyssinia, but a gloomy outlook if a large expenditure is necessitated, and a budget that will never balance and be on the wrong side for many years to come.

CHAPTER IV

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

THE geography of Abyssinia is now fairly well known as far as the rivers and boundaries are concerned, but there is a great deal to be learnt regarding the Danakil country on the east and the country to the south and south-west. The best maps of the country are those made by the Italians, but they are rather bewildering by the number of names they contain of unimportant little places consisting perhaps of three or four houses. Unless a map is made on a very large scale, say two inches to a mile, it is impossible to put in all the villages and local names for the small streams, etc. Many of the mountains are differently called by the inhabitants of the various slopes, and therefore names are not always to be relied on. As long as the local market towns are marked and those villages that possess a church, travellers will have no difficulty in finding their way about the country, and supplies can generally be purchased on market days to enable them to proceed from one market town to another.

The Italian colony of Erithrea which bounds Abyssinia on the north is well surveyed and the heights of mountains, government stations and plateaux have all been determined, and statistics of rainfall and temperature are kept and published. The colony is watered in the north by the rivers Ainseba and Barca, which have their rise on the Hamasen plateau near Asmara within a few yards of each other; they then separate, the one taking a nearly northerly course, the other a more westerly one; they meet again to the west of the Hagar plateau in the Habab country, and the Barca continues its course to Temerein, the apex of the Tokar delta, where it splits up into different streams and fertilises the Tokar district, its surplus water reaching the sea between Trinkitat and Aghig Seghir. The Ainseba is joined by all the small streams formed by the drainage from the western slopes of the Habab mountains, and the Barca by the streams that form after the rains in the northern part of the Dembela and Baze

countries; Keren may be called the watershed between the Ainseba and Barca rivers.

The Mareb river has some of its springs between Adi-Tchlai and Adi-Saul about the centre of the Hamasen plateau, and it also drains the south-western slopes of the Halai group of mountains and the water drainage of the range of mountains that run from Adi-Caia to Chersober above Adigrat. The chief eastern tributary of the Mareb is the Belessa, which rises near Guna-guna about half way between Senafe and Chersober. This range of mountains is the watershed between the western and eastern drainage, the latter losing itself in the Danakil country before it reaches the Red Sea. The fresh water reaches the Red Sea underground, preventing the coral insects from working and forming the barrier reef that runs along the whole Red Sea coast; wherever there is fresh water on shore there will be found a small or large inlet in the reefs offering good anchorage. Sheik Barghut, Suakin, Aghig and Massowah, being good examples of these natural harbours at the mouths of which the coral insect cannot work.

The Mareb river's southern watershed runs from near Entiscio on the east through the Gasgorie pass just to the north of Adowa, and then north-westerly through the province of Scire, the mountains of which drain north to the Mareb and south to the Tacazze river. There is always great confusion caused by the many different names by which the rivers are known, the Mareb for instance as soon as it gets into the low country is known by the name of the Gash. It runs past Kassala and joins the Atbara about ninety miles from the junction of that river with the Nile at El Damer.

After getting over the southern watershed of the Mareb the basin of the river Tacazze is reached. This river in its lower waters before it joins the Nile is known by the name of the Setite, and I believe it was known by the name of the Astaboras to the ancients. The Tacazze (and its many tributaries) drains all the most fertile and perhaps the most lovely portions of Abyssinia. Its eastern watershed runs along the razor-backed ridge of mountains followed by the English expedition to Magdala. They crossed very near the sources of this river which rise further to the east. The line of mountains to the south of the Tacazze nearly all drain south to the Blue Nile, the Tacazze only receiving trifling help from the mountains of the Wollo country—it may be called a river coming from a very old Christian

country, in distinction to that of the Blue Nile, which has its sources in a country mostly inhabited by Moslems. The Tacazze basin was never really entirely conquered by the Mahomedans, its inhabitants holding out in the many natural fortresses which it contains, especially in the Gheralta, Tembien, Semien, Waag and Lasta, with their easily defended passes. Here are still found the best of all the Abyssinian people and the women are noted for their beauty, so different from those of the south of Abyssinia and many of the eastern Galla tribes, who are common, coarse and uninteresting.

The western drainage of the Tacazze comes from the eastern face of the Walkeit mountains, the mountains of Semien, the highest part of the whole of Abyssinia, with its snow covered peak of Ras Detchem, and from the range of mountains that run from a little to the east of Gondar to Debra Tabor. It would be impossible to give the names of all the streams that add to its waters during the rains, and many maps are full of rivers that are either quite dry or only a chain of pools and puddles in the dry season. The rivers that always run during the dry season and are impassable torrents during the rains, are the Assam, that takes the drainage from the hills round Adowa; this comes from the north and runs into the Werri, that rises to the east on the north and north-west slopes of the rugged and precipitous Gheralta mountains with their limestone formation. The Werri is about sixty yards broad with very precipitous banks, the water in the dry season being three to four feet deep; it rises to thirty or forty feet in depth during the rains, and is then impassable owing to the strength of its current.

Then follows the Ghiva, which rises in the southern part of the Gheralta group and drains the country round Macalle; this river is insignificant during the dry season, and keeps to its shallow mussel-strewn bed, but in the rains it overflows its banks and inundates the country for hundreds of yards on each side and then it cannot be crossed. Between these two rivers is the lovely country of which the chief town is Abbi-Addi, situated on a group of red sandstone hills of fantastic shapes. Abbi-Addi is entirely isolated during the rains by the Werri, Ghiva and Tacazze rivers, the only footpath leading to it being down the steep sides of the Gheralta mountains where laden animals cannot pass.

Then the Samra river is reached, which divides the province of Tembien and its dependencies from the province

of Waag. The Samra is a fine broad river with a shingly bed, and rises in the mountains between Antalo and Amba Alagi; it is about one hundred and fifty yards wide and about three feet deep in the dry season; during the rains it must have a large volume of water as flood-marks are plainly visible at least twenty feet above the summer level, and it then in places overflows its banks and inundates a good bit of country.

The Tserare is the next large river; it drains nearly the whole of the Waag and Lasta provinces, and is not unlike the Samra in some respects, but larger and fully two hundred yards broad and about the same depth as the former. This river, when it joins its waters with the Samra, forms the most important tributary to the Tacazze on the east. The chief feeder on the west is the Menna, about the same volume as the Tserare before it is joined by the Samra; it drains the western basin of the Tacazze.

All the other rivers are of short length, and are during the rains very quick risers and fallers owing to the heavy and dangerous spates; the water that they bring down during the dry season being mere trickles, as most of it is used for irrigating the terrace cultivation.

There are many good views to be obtained of the valleys and their watersheds from the various high mountains within the country I am now describing. From the mountains above the town of Axum the course of the Mareb can be followed on its way to the low countries. From the mountains to the south of Adowa that of the Assam on its way to join the Werri.

From Abbi-Addi, the valley of the Tacazze can be seen, and the whole panorama of the Semien range of mountains, and the junctions of the Werri and the Ghiva with the main stream. The junction of the combined Samra and Tserare rivers can be seen from the high land just south of Fenaroa. Looking eastwards and northwards just before Sabandas is reached on the way to Abbi-Addi the mountains of Axum, Adowa, and those above Adigrat are plainly visible, embracing the whole valley of the Werri. From the south slopes of the Gheralta range, the mountains round Abbi-Addi and the valley of the Ghiva can be traced. From the old town of Samre the valley of the Samra is visible, also the range of hills from Antalo to the north of the Amba Alagi pass.

Above Socota the south of the Amba Alagi pass is visible, and the range of mountains till near Lake Aschangi,

but all to the south is one confused mass of peaks of rugged Waag and Lasta provinces; the latter country is all drained by the Tserare and its feeders.

From the bitter cold uplands of southern Lasta a splendid view of the sources of the Tacazze is to be obtained, and the course of the river can be traced for many miles. My first view of its upper waters was on the high mountains above Lalibela, from where the river can be traced till it makes a north-westerly bend. To the south-west and south can be seen the province of Beghemder and the high tablelands of Daunt Wadela and Dalanta; and to the south-east the view is shut out by the near mountains of Yejju with their steep sides, nearly perpendicular in many places.

On passing down the old English road that led to the Tacazze river from the Lasta highlands, I turned due east after crossing the river, and a short morning's march up the valley past the sources of the Tacazze led me by a very difficult gradient along a very boggy road to the top of the dividing ridge, from which a view not only of the Tacazze valley could be obtained, but that of the leading Yejju valley as well, the waters from which run to the Danakil country and lose themselves somewhere near the Italian possession of Assab Bay, no doubt to take an underground course to the Red Sea.

The whole of the basin of the Tacazze river and its feeders is what might be called broken country, and is totally different from the conformation of the basins of the northern and southern rivers that have their sources on the large upper tablelands of the Hamasen and in the vast downs of the Wollo and Shoa countries.

The Tacazze basin contains many small tablelands, as many of the large mountains are flat-topped and the view of the Semien range from Abbi-Addi makes the upper part of this province fairly level before it rises to its greatest height at Ras Detchem, which is often snow-capped. This mountain, I believe, has never been correctly measured, but it is from Italian accounts considerably over 16,000 feet in altitude.

The country round Adowa and Axum in many places is open land broken up with fairly regular eminences on which the chief villages are situated. All the open lands are cultivated and many of the sides of the summits as well. The mountains are more or less isolated with the exception of the south-east of Adowa, where they run in an ever increasing height till they join with the Gheralta group; a spur of

mountains runs from there to Macalle and Antalo diminishing in height towards Samre. The range continues from Antalo, increasing in altitude until the south of Amba Alagi when it again falls away towards Aschangi, only to rise again at the southern part of Lasta to another high group situated to the west of the road between Dildi and Wandatch, which is situated just before the descent commences into the valley where the Tacazze has its upper sources. The whole of the Lasta mountains are unsurveyed; the highest point is supposed to be Abouna Joseph, which is about 10,000 feet, but there are many peaks and points that look down upon this mountain and must be at least 2000 to 3000 feet above it.

The whole of the upper part of Waag and Lasta is broken up by immense canyons; the sides of them are covered with much vegetation and the cultivated tops of the canyons are for ever giving way during the rains, the rich soil being precipitated into the streams that run along the bottom of them, and I expect the enormous landslips that take place in these provinces have more to do in fertilising the waters of the Nile than any other of the districts. To give an instance of the wash and the loss of cultivated land that is going on in Abyssinia; in 1884 the market green at the town of Adowa was situated on the top of the gorge through which runs a tributary of the Assam river and was a good sized bit of open ground; in 1896, or in twelve years, the greater part of it had fallen in and disappeared, and had gone down the Assam river to the Werri and there on to the Tacazze or Atbara to join the Nile which fertilises Egypt. Here is one little place where in a few years thousands of tons of earth have been washed away and disappeared.

I regret I am not a geologist so I cannot explain the formation of the sides of these canyons; some of them are many hundreds of feet in depth and show different layers or strata of rock and earth, and nature has formed these rifts in the earth's surface and laid bare the various elements of which it is composed. The formation of the rocks round Adowa and Axum are the same as near Senafe, the bigger masses of rock being more frequent near the former places owing to the more stupendous convulsion of nature when this part of the country was made. I believe I am right in saying that the Senafe formation is of schistose rock with a good deal of sandstone, and interspersed with veins of quartz. This is what the country is like round Adowa, only the veins of white and other quartz are more frequent, and

the further one proceeds in a south-west direction towards Abbi-Addi and its neighbourhood the veins increase in number and thickness till one can see the white line stretching across valley and mountain. The rock round Axum is nearly all granite.

Before Abbi-Addi is reached red sandstone seems to be the general formation, with still plenty of broken white quartz, in small bits to good sized boulders, strewn thickly over the country. The boulders have been detached from their original position by the erosion of the softer rock and soil by climatic influences, and in some places the veins stand many feet above the surface and form fair-sized walls across the country; these walls are very distinct and a great feature in the landscape in many parts of the Waag and Lasta provinces.

The majority of the Gheralta rocks are limestone, and from this district the cement-plaster and whitewash was obtained by burning the rocks, for the construction of King Johannes' palace at Macalle. The high walls round the gardens and the stones used for building them and the houses, are more like what are used to the present day on the Red Sea coast. Antalo is quite close to Macalle, and the formation of the limestone in the two places must date from the same epoch. The Antalo limestone is known to the experts at the British Museum, but no mention is made of Macalle, where all sorts of fossil shells and corals are to be found.

The whole of Abyssinia is most likely of volcanic origin, or elevated by volcanic action perhaps of rather recent origin, although at the present there are no real active volcanoes. To the north-east of Abyssinia the nearest active mountains are in the Red Sea and on its coast; the furthest outlying one is Gebel Teir, which was in eruption in the early sixties and occasionally gives out a slight smoke or steam. Gebel Zughur, another island a little to the south-east of Massowah, is also volcanic. I spent three weeks on this island and visited the old crater. Nearly opposite to Gebel Zughur, on the mainland, is Hanfila, which has also been active in modern times, that is within the memory of the oldest inhabitant; at Araphile, at the bottom of Annesley Bay, there is another extinct crater. Earthquakes often take place in the north of Abyssinia; in 1877 and 1884 they were very frequent while I was there, doing some harm to the stone buildings. The Ailet hot springs just before and

during the earthquakes are very active, the water spouting out several feet in height, and the natives also know from them when disturbances are going to take place.

The basin of the Tacazze seems to be free from earthquake disturbances and hot springs but contains several extinct volcanoes in Waag and Lasta, and it is not till the Wollo country and Godjam are reached that hot springs are again found.

In Shoa there are several, the one called Filwoha at Adese-Ababa, the headquarters of King Menelek, being well known. The Hawash valley that separates the highlands of Abyssinia proper from the Harar highlands is full of them and extinct volcanoes, large and small. No European has explored this country properly, and all travellers make their way across this very hot valley with its unfriendly Galla inhabitants of the Arussi tribe as speedily as possible. There are several of these same hot springs on the Harar highlands, the best known ones being south of the main road from Harar to Adese-Ababa near Lega Hadeem, and they appear again on the high road from Gildessa to Zeilah at Arto, and also on the Somali road from Jigjiga to Bulhar above Wobali.

On the west of Abyssinia these springs I believe do not occur, and what can be learnt of the country is, that the eastern half of Abyssinia, from the south of the Habab mountains to about Adese-Ababa, shows more recent upheaval than the western half.

On getting out of the basin of the Tacazze, over the very narrow dividing ridge which in one place is for over half a mile not more than a hundred yards broad in any part, with a very steep drop on each side, a splendid view of the Yejju province is obtained, and the direct road from Aschangi, Dildi to Yejju is seen many hundreds of feet below. This road follows down one of the immense canyons or rifts so numerous in Abyssinia, and gradually opens out into a large valley surrounded by high cliffs from which numerous waterfalls descend, many of them with a sheer drop of great height. On reaching the valley these water-falls are made use of for irrigation purposes.

The country here reminds me very much of Ceylon, more especially round Newera-Eliza and Rambodie, only Yejju is incomparably more beautiful and much grander in every way. The climate of these two places must be very much the same, but the bleak downs of the highest plains above Yejju are

much colder, being swept by hail and sleet, and snow storms sometimes occur, but the snow melts at once on touching the ground. Basalt rock has been met with in many places in the Tacazze basin, but none of the columnar kind which here makes its first appearance, hereafter in the Wollo country and Shoa until nearly Adese-Ababa is reached to be the great feature of the landscape, recalling memories of the Giant's Causeway in Ireland.

Up to this point, in Abyssinia what strikes one most have been the giant ranges, groups, and isolated mountains of weird and fantastic shapes, the everlasting ascents and descents, and the perpetual windings and detours that have to be made to dodge and get round some nearly perpendicular bit of flat-topped country. Nature seems to have dumped down all over the provinces of Tigré and Amhara the mountains she did not require when she manufactured the other parts of the world, and therefore it takes more miles to journey to get a short distance further on either north to south, east to west, than in any other country I have travelled. At one part of the day it is travelling along the bottom of some gigantic crack in the earth's surface with a nearly tropical heat, and at another over some cold wind-swept plateau with a climate like England in winter. Every sort of vegetation is met with, the warm low valleys growing tropical and sub-tropical plants, while on the wind-swept downs and uplands the flowers and grains will be more of an Alpine nature. Within a few hours' march the following variety of fruit, grain, and vegetables will be found, combining those of a tropical, sub-tropical and cold climate. The banana, grape, orange, lime, pomegranate, peach, apricot and blackberry—the dhurra, maize, wheat, barley, bran, peas, tef, and other grains of a cold country—the chili, pumpkin, bhamea, tomato, potato, and many other sorts of vegetable.

The inhabitants that populate the northern country are a finer race, more hospitable, better mannered, and have the makings of a better class of people than those further south, and perhaps climate and position has something to do with their being a superior race, and it is now to be hoped that more will be known of them than formerly. The country has been closed for too long, and the people have passed through so many years of trouble that they have not been able to develop like other nations; but as formerly this part of Abyssinia produced the best kings, warriors and administrators, history may repeat itself, and the regeneration of

the country may again have its origin in the basin of the Tacazze valley.

The next drainage area to the Tacazze is that which contains the rivers that flow to the Danakil country and consists of the Yejju province and part of the Wollo country; there is little or nothing known of these rivers after they leave the highlands. Count Antonelli, I believe, is the only Italian explorer left alive that knows much about the country through which the drainage passes, and he only of the more southern of the two areas. The expeditions sent out by the Italian Government and by private enterprise from Assab Bay towards Yejju have been singularly unfortunate; the reason is hard to discover; it may perhaps be attributed to the fault of the explorers themselves not taking sufficient precautions, or from the inhabitants themselves, who perhaps next to the Arussi Gallas and the Masai are the most warlike and savage tribes north of the equator in the eastern part of Africa.

I know of two Italian expeditions that have been massacred in this part of the country, namely, those of Guilietti and Bianchi, that of the last named in 1884, and I believe that of the former in 1881. These expeditions were sent from the first Italian possession at Assab for political purposes, and also to open up the hinterland and try and tap the trade of Abyssinia.

The word hinterland always puts me in mind of the story of the missionary and the old lady regarding Mesopotamia; she did not know where it was, but thought the name was a most soothing one. There are many sins covered by those who ought to know better under the cloak of this mystic word, and I am pleased to say that Africa is being so quickly opened up that this "made in Germany" term will soon cease to exist, and all countries will know their own boundaries.

The Yejju basin commences as soon as the dividing ridge of the Tacazze is passed and extends to the rise to Boru Meida, including Lake Haïk, which is surrounded with the exception of one small gorge to the north by high mountains. There is a range of hills between the two drainages in this province; the streams from the northern slopes go with the numerous rivers from Yejju to make up the Golima river, which flows towards Assab, and there are several good views from the mountains to be obtained of its course through the low flat Danakil country. The waters from the southern slopes and from Lake Haïk drain into the Hawash river.

As soon as Boru Meida is reached the scenery changes; broad and nearly flat valleys are come to, the lower parts of them being mostly marshy, and the soil of a deep brown or black. The sides of the valleys slope gently upwards and are covered with cultivation, with here and there small groups of juniper and other coniferæ, and many large woods of kousso trees, the flowers of which are used as an antidote for tape-worm, from which all Abyssinians suffer. At Boru Meida the water drains in three different directions, and runs towards the Danakil country to the east, to the Bashilo which passes Magdala and joins the Abai, one of the branches of the Blue Nile, and also nearly due south to the Wancheet which drains into the Adabai, another tributary of the Blue Nile.

The country in the close proximity of Boru Meida, that is to say within two or three miles of the south end of the town, is full of springs, and from them come the highest or most north-eastern sources of the great Blue Nile river. About three miles to the north of Boru Meida runs the dividing ridge between the Yejju drainage and that of the Blue Nile, and from it can be seen the line of mountains running nearly due north and south that divide the drainage between the Blue Nile and the Hawash valley. A spur runs out from near Ancober towards the south-west, that also marks the southern watershed between north and south Shoa.

The whole country after arriving at Worro Eilou is open down and upland, with the exception of the great canyons which receive the waters of this district. The canyons along which the Wancheet and Mofa Woha rivers run are most stupendous works of nature, being in some places many hundreds of feet deep with nearly perpendicular cliffs, with a breadth of some three or four hundred yards to two or three miles across; in another chapter I give an account of my journey down them.

The northern part of Shoa, as far as the landscape is concerned, is most uninteresting; it carries no forest and nothing what we should term in England a decent-sized copse or wood; a bleak, wind-swept, cold, uninviting land during the winter season, the only relief to the eye being the young green of the growing grain crops contrasting with the brown fallows of many shades, and the light yellow or stone coloured stubbles. In summer, when the crops are being gathered and fields of grain in all stages of growth, there is some variety in the colouring of the country, but after lovely

Tigré, Amhara and Yejju, Shoa is most disappointing until the country round Godaburka is reached on the road from Adese-Ababa to Harar. The most striking thing to the eye in marching from Worro Eilou to Adese-Ababa is the great want of trees except in the big canyons of the Wancheet and Mofa Woha rivers. There is very little timber; the whole country has been entirely deforested by fires, which can be seen by the few specimens of big sycamore, fig, kousso and mimosa trees which still exist; many of them bear traces of the grass fires which sweep over the downs during every dry season; these fires die out at the top of the canyons, and therefore the trees in them are spared.

The drainage of south-eastern Shoa all goes to the Hawash river which runs into the Aussa province of the Danakil country. This country, of which hardly anything is known, should be very fertile considering that it receives such a quantity of deposit from such a large tract of mountainous country, but all the different Danakil tribesmen are shepherds and live by their flocks, and not cultivators like the Gallas of the highlands, who keep very few animals of any sort and till more of their land by hand than by the plough. The Arussi Galla mountains, which can be seen from the highland above Godaburka at Balchi and which stretch away from the Harar group in a west-south-westerly direction, mark the dividing drainage between the Hawash river and those streams that find their way out through the Somali country into the Arabian Sea.

The Hawash valley, which is of about 3000 feet lower level than the mountains which surround it, runs nearly due north from the high road between Harar and Adese-Ababa, and runs on until it joins the Danakil plains. The drainage from the Harar range of mountains just above Lega Hardeem until near Jigjiga all runs at first south and then finds its way to the different rivers that run through the Ogaden country and southern Somaliland to the Arabian Sea. The Hawash valley is not cultivated, and until quite recently was most unsafe owing to the constant raids made by the Arussi Gallas from their strongholds in the mountains that form its southern borders. It contains after the rains many small lakes formed in the volcanic depressions; a good specimen of these lakes and the largest is that of Matahara, which can be seen from many points along the road that runs through the Minjar province, which extends from Godaburka district to Choba. The Hawash valley is dotted with at present

dormant volcanoes, the oldest group being at Fantalle, but there are many isolated ones, some quite close to Matahara lake, the craters being most distinct. I have never had the time to visit them, and they would well repay the trouble taken by any sportsman or traveller if they had the time to spare when crossing the plain.*

The highest points of the Harar province are to the east at Konduto peak and to the west at Cunni. Not one of these mountains have as yet been climbed by Europeans, so their exact heights are not known. From French sources the former is put down at 10,000 feet, which I think is over-estimated. The highest point of the road near Cunni is just 8000 feet, and to the south-east of the road there are mountains that must be at least 3000 feet above this altitude. The whole of Harar province is more like those of Waag and Lasta, but not nearly so broken as the latter. The vegetation is much the same, and in both remains of very large forests are to be found. From Worabili, about twenty-five miles from the west of Harar, a large forest commences, which used to extend over a large area; there are now traces till Buoroma is reached, a distance of just one hundred miles, and the largest part left is round the Cunni district. This forest is gradually being destroyed by fire, and the very valuable trees, which consist chiefly of the Natal yellow pine, giant juniper and other coniferæ, are set on fire to make clearings for growing dhurra and other grains. I believe the only places in Africa where the Natal yellow pine is found is in Natal in the south and in the Harar province north, or some 38° of latitude apart. I do not think that it is met with between these places, and I have never seen it in any other part of Abyssinia. In Tigré and Amhara the juniper and another conifer of the same species are common, but not the gigantic and magnificent yellow pine, and in any other place than Abyssinia this tree would be carefully preserved for its utility and great commercial value.

The Harar province has no big black and bare uplands like Shoa, and consists of mountains fairly well covered with trees divided by enormous valleys of irregular shape. The land between Harar and near Gildessa to the north-east may be termed most abrupt, there being a difference in altitude

* Near Fantalle there is a tiny little volcano which I went to see. It is not more than forty feet in height. It is most perfectly shaped, with a little crater on its summit, and altogether a strange little pimple on the earth's face, which had not time to grow into a larger excrescence.

of considerably over 3000 feet in about twenty miles—over 2000 of which takes place in about nine miles, and a little over 1000 in three miles. From Gildessa there is a general decline over open plains until the foot hills are reached, and after they have been passed a maritime plain of about fifty miles in width has to be crossed before the sea beach is arrived at.

From Harar town to the east the mountainous country extends to Fiambaro (in the local language this means the nose of the mountain that points to the low land), when a large, long, oval valley, fairly open, is arrived at. This is the last of the dish-shaped crater valleys in the country, and a low range of mountains divides it from the vast grass prairies of upper Somaliland. From Fiambaro a good view of the southern slopes of the Harar system of mountains is obtained; they gradually slope to ridges of other mountains, always decreasing in height towards the Ogaden country, and the horizon seems to be fairly level but broken occasionally by small hills.

Following the eastern the upper or Jigjiga prairies extend towards Hargesa and Arabseo, where the first hills with volcanic peaks are arrived at; after passing these a lower prairie land is come to which continues until the vicinity of Dekaco, where there is again broken ground, then another lower plain at Ildemel is reached which extends to the foot hills which are situated immediately behind Berberah, where the maritime plain is reached. The foot hills are all volcanic and produce a most wonderful variety of volcanic discharge; after the rains, which are very irregular, and some seasons entirely fail, a good deal of grass springs up and large flocks then inhabit the country. Among these foot hills grows the curious stunted and gnarled tree that produces the gum myrrh of commerce so valued by the ancients, and pictures of this tree were found in the ruins of Babylon and in the ancient tombs of Egypt.

Abyssinia is not at all an uneasy country to travel in on account of the very conspicuous landmarks and the enormous extent of the landscape that is visible from the various high mountains. The atmosphere in the highlands is wonderfully clear and enormous distances can be seen. From Halai in the north on a clear day the Semien mountains are visible. Above Wandach the Semien can also be seen, and from Wandach the mountains to the north of Ifat, and from there the mountains round Cunni in the Harar province are visible,

and it might be possible perhaps to heliograph from one point to the other. Part of Halai range is also visible from Massowah on a clear day.

The climate in the highlands of Abyssinia is superb, and it is only in the valleys that it is unhealthy and malarial fever is to be caught. There is a great discussion going on at present about the mosquito, and it seems curious to me, having lived in so many unhealthy parts of the East, that the attention of doctors has not been drawn to this insect before. I have invariably found that where there is stagnant water contaminated by drainage and decomposing vegetable or animal matter, that the sting of the mosquito that breeds in this water is very venomous, and causes feverish symptoms. This fact is so well known to the Abyssinians that they never build their houses in the valleys where mosquitos abound, but always place their dwellings on the summits of the nearest hills. When they work in the cultivated parts of these valleys they always surround their fields with very strong hedges so that they need not remain at night to watch their crops, and even in the harvest time, at the dryest season of the year, they do not leave their houses in the morning until the mists in the valley clear away, and they always return to them before sunset when the mosquito commences to come out.

Very little fever was known at Suakin before the Egyptian steamers commenced running there frequently, and there were no mosquitos in the place, and curtains to the beds were never used, although on the other side of the Red Sea at Jeddah sleep was impossible without them, and Jeddah is known also as a very feverish place. The mosquito was, there can be no doubt, imported from Suez in the fresh water brought down from there in the water tanks of the Egyptian steamers for the use of the Egyptian officials. Now at Suakin the mosquito in the town is quite common and so is fever, while outside the town fever and the insect are unknown.

By looking at the map of Abyssinia, the belts of tropical valley will be found to be very few and they are found more in the centre, along part of the Tacazze and Blue Nile rivers with a few of their tributaries. Sheltered and confined valleys, however, in all parts of Abyssinia are not nearly so healthy as the more open ones of higher altitude. A traveller need never spend more than a night or two in unhealthy parts; it is, however, different with the sportsman; to enjoy the

best of sport he must follow the game that inhabits the damp jungle, and during the rainy season he would be lucky to escape a bout of fever.

With regard to the botany of Abyssinia the greater part of the country has been thoroughly worked out, especially by the late Professor Schimper—his son, who travelled with me a good deal in the country, however, informs me that his father did hardly any work in the eastern half of the country, and then only in the dry season ; so there is still a great deal to be learnt about the plants that are to be found in the unexplored part during the wet season and immediately after it. Geographical details of Abyssinia are sadly wanted, such as amount of rainfall over a series of years at different stations. The Italians can supply details of the north in the Hamasen, but there can be no doubt that central and south-western Abyssinia have a much greater rainfall than the north, and the extremes of temperature are also greater in these parts.

There is very little known about the geology of the country, and as it has been so broken up and shows such grand disturbances, its formation should be very varied and contain many surprises, and minerals no doubt should be very plentiful in some parts. Gold has been found in many places since the earliest times, but the many centuries of anarchy and confusion which the country has undergone has prevented any thorough examination of the different districts in modern times, and since the time of the Axumite dynasty up till 1895 Abyssinia never had a coinage of her own, so there was no necessity to seek for the more precious metals.

Coal has been reported in several places, but I have seen nothing but black shale. I cannot say whether it exists in the west of the country as reported round Lake Tsana, as my journeys have always been in the eastern half of Abyssinia, and I am certain that no outcrop exists in this part, unless on the slopes towards the Danakil country, which I should think is highly improbable owing to the volcanic formation.

There is a large and very highly interesting field open for scientific research, and many years must lapse before Abyssinia is thoroughly known, and it is not likely that it will be opened up while the power is all in the hands of one person. Italy will no doubt take her share in the development that is bound to come sooner or later, and her territories will be explored long before the rest of the country. Unfore-

seen circumstances may arise which will allow of an opening up of Abyssinia more speedily than the present prognosticates, but I hardly think that they are likely unless some radical change takes place within the next few years; in the meantime, however, the artist, archæologist, botanist, etc., can do good work in learning more about the country and bringing its now unknown details before the public. From the lower classes they will receive a hearty welcome, and from a great many of the well-to-do people who wish to see their country opened up, and an end put to the constant disputes that arise among the upper classes.

CHAPTER V

ITALIAN CAMPAIGN IN 1896

IT is useless my giving any description of Massowah, as it is now such a well-known town. I have seen it change from a place containing a few fairly good Arab houses built of white coral, surrounded by a collection of wretched mat and grass huts, and a much worse place than Suakin was in 1884, into a decent town with good buildings and a harbour that is the best between Port Said and Bombay. It has now good public buildings, custom house, jetties, and everything complete, with a railroad that is gradually being built towards the interior and to a highland country with a European climate. Should the Italian colony of Erithrea be blessed with a period of peace, its future and that of the port of Massowah is assured. At Massowah all sorts of things can be procured in the respectable European stores, and a traveller or sportsman need take little out with him from home as he will find he can purchase all necessaries and nearly all European luxuries there cheaper than he can import them.

About six weeks after the battle of Adowa in 1896, I arrived at Massowah on my way to Abyssinia, and the Italian army had already proceeded up country to the highlands on its march to the relief of Adigrat where a small Italian garrison was still holding out. A stay of a few days at the seaport enabled Colonel Slade, the late English military attaché at Rome, who I was travelling with, and myself to procure our transport, and we started to join General Baldissera's headquarters at Adi-Caia, which is situated on a broken up small plateau at the top of the Hadas Pass, the first open ground reached in Abyssinia proper. On the small higher plateau ridge to the east is situated the ancient ruined town of Koheita, of which I give some particulars in my chapter on Axum.

We started from Harkeeko, one of the fortified suburbs situated about an hour and a half's march from Massowah,

on the 23rd April 1896, and after an uninterrupted march for the baggage animals of twelve and a half hours, arrived at Chilalie at 2.30 A.M. The Italians do not make use of the English road from Zullah to Senafe that runs up the Komali torrent, but have opened a shorter and better road up the Hadas river which runs from the mountains to the north of Adi-Caia. The direction of the Hadas river, as soon as the foot hills are reached, is parallel to the Komali torrent, followed by the English expedition. After the winter rains this low country, which may be called the Wooah plain, is a favourite grazing country for the flocks of the wandering Arabs in the neighbourhood of Massowah; formerly very good small game shooting was attainable, besides an occasional chance at larger game, such as the lion, leopard, pig, Kudoo and Beisa or Oryx antelope. I had wandered all over this country in former years and knew it thoroughly.

After Chilalie, to which there is a good road, the track begins to get worse, crossing and recrossing the bed of the stream the whole way to the Mai-Cheo. The distance between the foot mountains varies greatly; sometimes the road is barely eighty yards across with steep or precipitous sides and flood marks thirty and forty feet above the river bed. In other places it widens out into miniature valleys from five to six hundred yards across, which offer in places fair grazing. The valleys are all thickly covered with mimosa bush and trees, some of them being of great size, and producing plenty of shrubs and trees on which the transport camels can feed. The road during the rains is most dangerous owing to sudden spates which may have their origin from a heavy thunder storm miles away in the interior. I have often seen the effects of these sudden floods, which sweep everything in front of them, and carry away sometimes the flocks belonging to the natives. The bodies of the camels, cows, sheep and goats either being washed down into the low countries where the flood may expend itself, or carried out to sea if the storm has been a very heavy one. The dull roar of the flood may be heard some distance off and escape from it is then very easy, but should the flood come at night time and the shepherd or travelling merchant be encamped on a comparatively low level above the bed of the stream, then accidents may happen. Mai-Cheo in several places has running water, a small stream trickling over the stony and sandy bed, joining pools of water two or three feet deep.

The pools are full of small fish about the size of a minnow, the largest being about the size of a gudgeon, and from the presence of these fish the water in the stream must be a permanency. The name of these fish I do not know, in shape they are more like the English chub than any other.

I was thoroughly tired out on arriving at Mai-Cheo, which is eight and a half hours' ride from Chilalie, having been in the saddle twenty hours out of the last thirty-one, with only three hours' sleep, and not having ridden for nearly three years I was decidedly stiff and lost leather from which I did not recover for over two months. The heat up this road is terrific, and the shade temperatures during the last two days were 96° and 94°. The mountains shut out all vestige of breeze, and the radiated heat that came off the rocks was very trying. The march from Mai-Cheo to the top of the pass that leads on to Adi-Caia plateau is always up hill, and the last rise to the top of the pass is very steep. Here the Italian engineers were at work improving the road by blasting the outjutting rocks, the explosions we had heard many miles away, the noise of them echoing and re-echoing down the narrow gorge through which the track lay. On rising on to the Adi-Caia plateau the climate and scenery changes and a well-cultivated country is reached, with an altitude of over 6500 feet above the sea level. The change is very great from the stifling heat of the confined chasm to the pure wind-swept uplands. In one, the lightest summer clothes were only just bearable, and on the plateau the moment the sun sank below the horizon a thick ulster was necessary, the thermometer falling to the fifties and at daylight and a little before sunrise to the forties.

I was never more pleased than when the narrow road was left behind with its constant stream of transport animals going to and from the front. Camels in hundreds were constantly passed, and the mortality among them had been very great, and their dead bodies were never out of sight along the whole road from Hareeko. An attempt had been made to burn them, but it was not altogether a success, and the dreadful smell was most unpleasant. The mules often refused to pass the bodies and swerved and shied in narrow parts of the roads. Luckily there were no precipices to go over, and the worst one had to put up with was a scratching from the thorn trees or a bruise from being run against a rock I rode the same mule from Massowah to Zeilah, and although she must have seen thousands of them she never

liked passing a dead camel, a dead mule or a horse she did not mind.

The Italian transport was altogether a failure, and they have much to learn from the English in the way of feeding their troops at a distance from their base. Had it not been for the Aden firm of Messrs Bevenfeld & Co. they would never have been able to go on with their campaign. This firm had a contract to carry up stores to Adi-Caia and Asmara at 25 liras a hundredweight, and they employed several thousand camels on the service and were never behind-hand in their work. There was an excuse certainly for the Italians; as after their defeat at Adowa they lost nearly the whole of their regular transport which they had organised, but still this would not altogether account for the total absence of regimental transport that existed, and handing the chief source of supply for their army to civilian contractors, who might fail them in time of need, was an unwise proceeding. This, fortunately, the contractors never did, and had plenty of stores in the depôts at Adi-Caia and Asmara at the end of the campaign.

What struck me most up to this point was the happy-go-lucky way in which the Italians worked. At the base at Massowah, although it was in time of war, the Government offices were closed from eleven till three, and again at six o'clock. Their working hours were from six to eleven A.M., and from three to six P.M., and during these hours alone was business conducted. Clearing the transport and store ships was left to the agent of the steamers, and there were seven men-of-war in the harbour and not a fatigue party of sailors were employed to clear the stores, or a steam launch belonging to them to tow the barges to the jetties at the railway head; everything was left to civilian enterprise. The railway conveyed the goods to Sahaati, seventeen miles inland, for the Asmara base; and those for Adi-Cara that went by the Hadas road, which we came up, might have been taken out by the light line that runs to Harkeeko, but the transport animals had to make a three hours' march there and back, and load up at Massowah. The steamer that we arrived by brought the heavy Italian mail with all the letters for the soldiers at the front; the post office took three days to sort and deliver the mail. The telegraph was nearly as bad, and constant breakdowns were occurring. Being accustomed to see things managed so differently at Suakin during the campaigns at that place, I

wondered what the organisation of the fighting force must be like, and from the 25th April to the 10th June I had ample opportunities of studying it and forming an opinion, and I now do not wonder at the Adowa reverse.

The Italian troops that were being assembled for the relief of Adigrat consisted of two divisions of 7000 rifles each, and a native force of about 5000 rifles; these being composed of Abyssinians and the inhabitants of the colony of Erithrea under Italian officers, and were then on their march from Kassala, where they had lately defeated the Dervishes. This would make General Baldissera's fighting force about 19,000 men, out of which he would have to leave a garrison at Adi-Caia, Senafe and Dongolo. The Hamasen plateau was guarded, irrespective of this force, by the garrisons of Adi-Quala on the top of the pass leading down to the Mareb river, the fortifications of Adi-Ugri, and the strong fortress of Fort Baldissera commanding the town of Asmara. The advance part of the army had already encamped at Adi-Caia before our arrival there, and what struck me as being very curious, when we rode up to the wells and tanks which supply this place, that we came across two generals with a numerous staff inspecting the works that were being made. They must have seen that Colonel Slade was a military man by his uniform, and yet no notice was taken of him, and no aide-de-camp was sent to find out what he wanted and where he had come from. They evidently did not expect him, and perhaps had no idea that we had made such a rapid march from Massowah, we having got over the sixty-eight miles from Harkeeko in fifty-one hours with our baggage animals (marching at night was impossible owing to the state of the road); no great march on a good road, but considering the roughness of the track from five miles the other side of Chilalie to the top of the Adi-Caia pass, we had made a record for the country.

At Adi-Caia we were given a place to camp just outside the church and churchyard, and I shall never forget the trouble I had to pitch the tent with the servants that we had, who had never seen the sort of tent before. During our march up country we slept at the Italian encampments, and we had no time to pitch a tent. It was blowing a gale of wind and quite cold, we having left a tropical heat and come into what was more like a late autumn day in England. Colonel Slade had left with the Italian military doctor who had been our passenger out from Naples, and had come up with

us from the base to call on General Baldissera. Darkness had set in, and pitching the tent, which would insist on coming down owing to the strong wind and the tent pegs giving in the stony ground, was no easy matter. I wanted to keep down below near the water on good green turf and in a sheltered place, but my opinion was not listened to, and during our whole stay at Adi-Caia, our camp was most uncomfortable. I went to bed tired out and supperless, except for a biscuit and some sardines. No firewood to light a fire with to make a cup of tea, and the servants were all shivering owing to the cold.

The position at Adi-Caia was a strong one, situated on a plateau ridge and surrounded on three sides by lower open ground some 400 feet below. The open ground consisted of arable land and water meadows, which gave good grazing for the transport animals. The fields were dotted here and there with the corpses of mules that had died of either glanders or the African horse-sickness and lay unburied, tainting the air and spreading the disease to animals that grazed in their vicinity. In the morning I rode round the place and found the only defences that had been constructed were one small redoubt, and the top of the plateau strengthened in front by a breastwork of stones. To the rear was another breastwork crowning the height of a neighbouring ridge, over which the road to the Hadas gorge ran. This had been thrown up after the defeat near Adowa and was now abandoned. The position, although naturally a strong one towards the south, east and west, could have easily been attacked from the rear, and the Abyssinians would soon have found out its weak spot and got round it. In all their battles against their invaders they have invariably cut their lines of communications, and the Hadas-Adi-Caia road would be a perfect death trap had the inhabitants of the country risen in rebellion, as it was commanded by scrub and rock-covered mountains on each side, which were impossible for a European to swarm up, but offered no great obstacle to a bare-footed Abyssinian mountaineer. There was hardly a point along the road where a European force could properly deploy and put into line a sufficient number of rifles to check an attacking force.

General Baldissera rode past our camp in the morning unaccompanied by anyone and spoke to me. I had to answer many questions and give an account of myself, and I believe the result was satisfactory, as he was most civil and

asked me to call upon him. I was greatly taken with the General from the very first, and I could see he knew a great deal about the country, and what was required to be done, and what a few officers he had that knew the country. The stay we made at Adi-Caia lasted five days, during which time I had ample opportunities to talk to the natives; among them I found some old friends who had seen me before at Massowah, Asmara, Adi-Tchlai and Adowa. Their information varied greatly, but a good many of them were of the same way of thinking, which gave me a basis to work upon to build up the truth. They were all unanimous in saying there would be no fighting, and that all the Abyssinian armies had been disbanded, except the few regulars always kept under arms, and gone to their homes to plough the ground and to sow seed for the coming rains. I remember telling an officer in the Italian Intelligence Department this—he did not know my name and that I knew the country and the habits of the Abyssinians, and I had some splendid news given me, which he no doubt thought that I should telegraph home. Unfortunately, from the very commencement General Baldissera told me that while the campaign was going on he did not wish me to telegraph home, but I had his full permission to see what was going on and as it turned out there was no news worth the cost of a telegram to England. There were rumours about this and that enough to make a startling heading of a newspaper's handbill, but no truth in them, and as I determined to find out exactly what had been done and what the future was likely to be, it was no use forming any opinion until both sides of the question had been thoroughly studied, and this could not be done on only one side of the frontier.

Before the Italians made their advance on Adigrat I had many conversations with officers who had taken part in the battle before Adowa; but no detailed narrative could be strung together of the fight, and at the best they were only personal experiences of an individual in one small fractional part of the whole great battlefield, which although interesting was of no great value in explaining what had really taken place.

Comparisons are generally odious, and I am afraid when comparing the Italian army that I saw going to the relief of Adigrat to our troops when campaigning in the Soudan, the contrast was too painful and the less said about it the better.

I will give one quotation from my diary of the 2nd May, when I was watching the advance of the army across the good road that leads along the ridge of the Cascasse pass to Amba Arab-Terica above Senafe. "Met half way through the pass another battalion of native troops from Kassala, and saw many of the black soldiers and native troops who knew me. This battalion was looking just as smart as the one that arrived yesterday under Colonel Stephani who commands them. These natives have marched with their regimental transport from Kassala in twelve days, a distance of 432 kilometres, over a bad road. This works out at about twenty-two miles, three furlongs per day, nothing very extraordinary in a flat country, but considering the roads and mountain passes and that they brought their transport through with them, it may be put down as a good march. They seemed in excellent condition and looked smart and fit for anything.

"The appearance of the native soldiers compares most favourably with the poor Italian soldiers; the former are as smart as the latter are slack, and it is a most painful sight for a civilian who has been accustomed to see English troops campaigning, to see these poor fellows struggling along, overladen, dirty and ragged, without what we in England should call any discipline or the *amour propre* of a soldier. The officers keep themselves neat and tidy, but then again they have little with them, and I do not know what English officers would do under the circumstances that the Italian officers are placed in. The Italian soldier has to carry his greatcoat, blanket, cooking pots, water bottle, a fourth part of a tent, and 186 rounds of ammunition; besides any other little things he may have, and often a couple or three days' rations as well. Clothes besides what he has on, he has none. These people are conscripts and not volunteers, and taken away from their country to fight what they consider an unjust war against a warlike enemy whom they stand in great awe of.

"A regiment I saw come in yesterday from the Asmara base is a type of the regiments in the two divisions that compose the army for the relief of Adigrat. Helmet, anything and of any shape; many common sola-tope hats from India, with or without the badge of the regiment, as the case may be; others with common canvas shaped helmets of flimsy construction; others with brown karki-coloured wide-awakes; some who have lost their helmets, or have not been

served out with them, have a Moorish tarbush with a blue tassel at the end of a long string. Karki coats and trousers, the former too short and small for appearance sake, and the latter too full for comfort; boots of brown leather, which look well when new, but which unfortunately do not last. The great coat, blanket, and part of tent are carried in rolls over each shoulder, and the rifle slung over all, the bayonet flapping at the side. Some of the men had gaiters, others tucked their trousers into their socks; some do not, some have one leg of the trousers tucked in only. I waited to see the whole of this regiment pass and examined it critically, as I thought what would some of my military friends at home say, and what would they think of English officers who commanded such a regiment. The soldiers are a fine, sturdy, strong, healthy-looking lot, and would do credit to any country. From what little I have seen of the French, the Italians are individually, in spite of their dirty clothes and ragged appearance, a much finer set of men, and if properly fed and properly looked after, I believe would go anywhere, as under the present very hard circumstances in which they are carrying on their campaign, they seem cheery and in fairly good spirits. They seem lacking in steadiness, and in my poor opinion they have not the look of men that could be relied on at a pinch, and save themselves the same as our troops did when they were broken at the battle of Tamaai. I may sum up: if they were broken they would become altogether unmanageable, and their officers would have little or no control over them; this, I suppose, must always be the case with the European short service system, when the officers know little or nothing about their men."

The road that the Italians made their advance by from Senafe to Adigrat was nearly the same as that used by the English. Senafe has not changed since that time, but round Efessi or Goose plain more people have settled down; but their villages are not a quarter full, they having lost heavily during the cholera and famine. Senafe, it may be remembered, was the first great English depôt in the highlands, and the remains of the old camping ground is still visible, and the natives to the present time make use of the road that the English built.

The Italians soon cleared out the wells from which the English water supply was drawn, and the walls wanted little doing to them, and it saved their engineering depart-

ment a good deal of heavy labour. It is seldom found in history that one European nation makes use of another's work in a foreign country like in this instance. The English cemetery still exists, and Colonel Dunn's grave and many of the others are still in a good state of repair. The wall round the cemetery has fallen, and the enclosure is now full of small mimosa trees, dog rose, and jessamine bushes, and with a very little trouble could be put in proper order. A wild rose tree covers the stone and inscription marking the place of Colonel Dunn's body, and the inscription is still perfect. This officer lost his life by accidentally shooting himself with his gun.

On the day after my arrival General Baldissera sent for me and asked me to go back to Adi-Caia, and remain there until he arrived at Adigrat. He feared there was going to be some heavy fighting, and as he wished most likely to make use of my services after the fighting, and if I was recognised by the Abyssinian spies as being present with the Italians it might militate my position and what he would require me for, he thought it better that I should go back. He informed me that no Italian newspaper correspondent would be allowed to send telegrams, and the Italian War Office at Rome would give the European press full particulars of everything that they ought to know, and that no press messages were to be allowed till after General Baratieri's trial was over at Asmara. I mention these particulars as a warning what may be looked for should the Italians again engage in hostilities with Abyssinia.

Fair criticism on any campaign can do no country any harm, but sensational newspaper paragraphs and information may. In the case in point, the enemy could learn nothing from the press as they were not in possession of telegraphs, but as soon as the Abyssinians are in possession of their telegraph lines, they will be able to obtain particulars of what their enemy is doing through French sources.

The Abyssinian spy department is excellently managed and arranged, and the information is obtained by people friendly to them on the other side of their frontier. Women are greatly made use of to obtain news, and they have the chance of getting employment in the officers' households, and some of them follow the troops in their marches in the field. The arrival or departure of every regiment at the base is known, and its destination is soon found out, and the number of guns that accompany the army. This news is passed on from one

to another, and the frontier being so sparsely guarded, getting across it is easy enough. It is also a very hard thing to get hold of the movements of the Abyssinians and their numbers; they change their camps so rapidly and march at such a pace and receive reinforcements so quickly, that correct information of their numbers one day may be entirely wrong the next, and arrangements made by Europeans to attack a position that was held in force may be found to be entirely useless, as the enemy may have in one night taken up another forty miles away. The Italians only made use of their native troops as scouts; but to watch an enemy like the Abyssinian is no easy job, as he employs the same means of scouting and can always concentrate a larger number of men at any given point than his enemy, and while the attention of the scouts is taken up and they are falling back on their European supports, the bulk of the enemy may have changed their position and have to be again refound, and the whole work has to be begun over again.

An Abyssinian general need never fight unless he likes, and can always choose his own battle-ground. There are only several towns and positions in Abyssinia that are worth their while to defend, and no doubt the key of the north is Axum, with its old sacred and historical traditions. It always seemed to me to be a wrong policy on behalf of the Italians not making it their headquarters when they once crossed the Mareb. It is quite as easy of defence as Adowa, and the approach is equally as good. Any enemy holding Axum and treating the priests fairly, would gain great prestige all through Abyssinia.

The only shots fired during the relief of Adigrat were by the scouts and outposts, which were magnified by the Italians into successful engagements, when the only Abyssinians north of Adigrat were a few Agamé men belonging to Ras Sebat and Hagos Taferi, who had been before on the side of the Italians. The Italians, on their advance to Adigrat, destroyed many villages round Dongolo and in the Entiscio district in revenge for the cruel way in which the inhabitants treated the fugitives from the battle of Adowa. There was only one village, just to the west of the road at Dongolo, that was spared, as the chief of it had given asylum to the fugitives and treated them kindly.

I was very much amused with the inhabitants of the Hamasen and of the Senafe district; they followed the army on each flank, knowing very well that the inhabitants of the

villages that had illtreated the fugitives would retire before the Italian force, and that all the property which they could not take away with them would be hidden and not left in the houses to be looted and burnt. The property is generally buried and securely hidden against Europeans or even natives from the low countries, but Abyssinians know the likely place to look for it. In this instance they found large quantities of grain, provisions and household effects, which they carried off back to their country. On my march to Chersober, near Adigrat I met hundreds of men, women and children, with their donkeys and mules all heavily laden. The Agamé people are not at all popular, and both their Mahomedan brethren and the Christians looted them.

I had to wait a fortnight at Adi-Caia before General Baldissera gave me permission to go to the front again, and I amused myself by going on small excursions in the neighbourhood; to the ruined town of Koheita, which is little known and altogether unexplored, a mere account having been given of the above ground and ruins. We had a good monkey hunt one morning, many of the garrison and coolies belonging to the commissariat joining in. The dog-faced monkey is most numerous in this country, and does a lot of damage when the crops are ripe; they used to come down to the commissariat camp to pick up grain or any food that was to be got. By the men making a detour of about a mile the monkeys could be cut off from the big hill to which they always made when disturbed. The chase was then over the open ground and small bare hills, before they could reach thick bush where they were safe. It was very amusing seeing a band of over a hundred monkeys of all sizes scampering away; the old males instead of keeping behind to encourage the others and to protect their families were the first to escape; then the most active of the females that had no babies to encumber them, and then the mothers with their children. I saw one mother when hard pressed deliberately throw away her young one and make off. The beautiful tales that travellers spin about monkeys defending their young and the bravery of the old lion-maned males is a myth, like many other travellers' yarns. I have found monkeys only too glad to escape when they have come across men, but they are bold enough with little children and an unprotected woman. The result of the hunt was three young ones, which were taken back to camp to make pets of. The Italian "Tommy Atkins" seems to be just as fond of animals as his English brother,

and several of the regiments had monkeys and dogs which went through the campaign, and one of the native regiments possessed a monkey that had been in nearly all the engagements against the Dervishes and Abyssinians and had been twice to Kassala. He used to ride on one of the mules that carried the spare ammunition and was perfectly at home and happy.

I heard from the natives that visited me at Adi-Caia terrible accounts of the famine and cholera that had devastated the country. The locusts destroyed nearly the whole of the crops, then the cattle disease broke out and killed over three-fourths of the horned cattle, and then to complete the misery, the winter and spring rains failed. The population began to starve, and cholera and a malignant sort of typhus fever broke out, which claimed many victims, whole families perishing. It was not till later on that I saw how truly awful the epidemic had been, whole villages being abandoned. From a distance a hamlet on the mountain side might be seen, and looked as if it was perfect, only no people could be seen moving about, and no smoke issuing from the cottages. On approaching, the roofs of the huts would be found in bad repair, and on entering it, not a human being was to be seen. The doors of the buildings nearly off their hinges, the thorn bushes that shut the enclosures round the huts were to one side, and grass and weeds growing everywhere; a more luxurious patch of vegetation or rank grass, about six feet in length by two in breadth, would mark the spot where some poor victim lay unburied. On looking into the houses they would be found as if the occupants had just vacated them, but on a closer examination, when the eye got accustomed to the semi-darkness inside after the glare of the bright sunshine in the open, several skeletons would be found, either on the raised end of the hut or on a native bedstead. In one hut I found five remains; one was that of a woman, as I could tell by the remains of her dress, alongside of her on the same bed lay two small skeletons, one a little larger than the other, both of the little skulls resting on the arm bones of what perhaps were their mother's. Behind the door was another body, evidently of a boy, the leg bones stretched out and those of the upper part of the body in a small heap. The owner of them had evidently died with his back resting against the wall; the last body was curled up near the fireplace alongside which were several empty cooking vessels. One examination of these abandoned villages was enough

for me, and from this specimen I could well see what this fertile country had suffered from the series of years of war, famine and pestilence.

I was, of course, anxious to find out how the Italians behaved to the starving population, and if they followed the same policy as at Suakin, when the Egyptian Government only acted under pressure, and gave relief after thousands of people had already died. The famine in Abyssinia and Suakin ran conjointly, and had the opportunity been seized by the Government for relieving the starving population, it would have made all those whose lives were saved friendly for ever. This was the effect on those that received food and medical attendance at Suakin, and it would have been the same in Abyssinia. What relief was given by the Italians was done by the officers solely out of their own pockets, and they could ill afford it, not being rich or well paid by their Government. The individual Italian officer is much liked by the inhabitants, and all the troubles that have been caused have arisen from the Italian policy conducted from Rome, and not from any fault of those that served in the country.

There was one incident that took place near Massowah in the early history of the colony that must be looked back upon with shame and regret; happily this can never occur again. It is useless my putting it on paper, as the case is closed, and the actions of a few bad men cannot be laid at the door of the many gentlemanly and highly intelligent officers that now serve their country so honourably and faithfully in the colony of Erithrea.

On the 16th May I again left for the front, remaining at Senafe for the night, and next day marched to Dongolo, passing Barachit, a fine open bit of country, with plenty of water and good grazing ground. Soon after leaving Barachit a range of mountains is reached, and the small district of Guna-guna is come to. Guna-guna is a lovely little valley surrounded by high mountains. The end of it is blocked by an abrupt and steep pass. It is famed for the church dedicated to Saint Romano, near which is a famous spring of water which forms one of the sources of the Mai-Muna river. The valley takes its name from the guna-guna tree, which is there first met in Abyssinia, and afterwards becomes one of the commonest ornamental plants around the houses of the higher classes. This tree is one of the banana tribe, but produces no edible fruit,

only black seeds, and is the same as is seen planted out in the London parks and in public gardens in the south of England.

On reaching the top of the pass, a stony, barren-looking plateau is reached, and in front, to the south-west, a good view of the Adowa mountains is obtained about thirty miles distant, the Entiscio district being about half-way. To the south is the high ridge that divides the Dongolo depression and valley from the Mai-marat plain, and the Chersober ridge rises abruptly from it, along which the road runs to Adigrat. We covered the distance from Senafe to Dongolo in eight hours, and I was very glad to get over the march as the day had been very hot, no breath of wind, and there was no vestige of shade on the road. The smell of dead transport animals, and myriads of flies spoilt what would have been a charming march through lovely and most interesting scenery. The heat of the sun was like what is sometimes felt in England before rain, and before we arrived at our destination a heavy storm was raging over the southern portion of the Hamasen plateau and the valley of the Mareb. We got nothing of it but a heavy dust storm and puffs of wind, at first like a sirocco, and then quite cool, making an overcoat necessary.

The native troops were nearly all stationed at Dongolo under Colonel Stephani, and they had been employed in punishing the villages in the neighbourhood for the part they took in the cruelties against the Italian refugees from the battle of Adowa. The villages were all in ruins, and the country that had once carried a large, busy and prosperous population was now depopulated, and it will take several years before it regains its former prosperity. I met with a hearty reception from Colonel Stephani, who kindly put me up at his own quarters and gave me a very good dinner. The native troops thoroughly understand how to procure supplies, and their officers were living remarkably well compared to what the officers of the regular army were. Chickens, eggs, fresh milk, vegetables, and fresh mutton in abundance besides the ordinary camp fare, and a good cook withal to turn out a good dinner. Many of the officers of the native regiments are old campaigners and, like Englishmen, thoroughly understand how to make themselves comfortable, whereas it is perfectly sad to see how the majority of the regular officers fare. Everything, however, is so different to what Englishmen are accustomed to; I know that they

can live on next to nothing when they are put to it, but when it is possible to be comfortable they are; here in this campaign no attempts are made, and the golden maxim of "spare no expense to live as well as you can" is ignored. There have been more lives lost in campaigning in Africa by semi-starvation and bad cooking and going to bed tired-out and hungry, thereby laying the foundations for disease, than from the bullets, spears and swords of the enemy.

We sat long into the night talking about their last fights against the Dervishes, and the last campaign against the Abyssinians; and of course as some of the officers had taken part in the fight and General Baratieri's trial had not taken place they could not say what they really thought, but from what I could gather of the opinion of those that had been present, that the moment they left their position at Entiscio there was little or no chance of gaining a battle against the force to which they were opposed had it been 70,000 instead of 120,000.

I remained behind next morning to see a brigade drill and sham-fight of the native troops. They certainly are a wonderfully active and fine set of troops; they are not up to the standard of drill which we are accustomed to in India, but it is seldom that our Indian troops would be asked to manœuvre over such ground, even on the Indian frontier, as I saw these men work over. An attack on a ruined village and a steep ridge was very well carried out; every bit of cover was utilised, and for a long time not a man could be seen; the scrub was about four feet high, which was ample to hide them, and not a head or back or a rifle were visible until within forty yards, when the last rush was made on the crest. These troops seem to know their business thoroughly, and once the officers have told them what they are required to do they will perform it and do not require their officers to lead, thereby saving them greatly for more important work. There is not that constant bothering the men with words of command, and the silent way these barefooted men get over the ground is wonderful. Their officers have the utmost confidence in them, and it gives them therefore more time to watch the enemy and observe what he is doing, and how to meet or alter the attack.

The native troops have had to do all the fighting round Kassala and at Agordat, and thoroughly defeated the Dervishes in bush fighting and broken ground, which is more difficult than in the open, where the majority of

our last fights have taken place. The ground on which the battles were fought was more like what is round Tamaai and Tofrick than that round the Atbara and Omduraman.

An uninterrupted march of five hours brought me to Chersober, passing *en route* the open grass land of Maimarat, one of the English camping places, where the second division of the Italian army was just entering on their return from the front near Adigrat. The men looked all the worse for their three weeks' campaign since they left Adi-Caia. I got on to a path above the road and watched them, and I could only liken the formation of the regiments to a comet or a blot of ink on paper that has been wiped away with the finger; a certain attempt at regular marching at the head of the regiment, and an ever-decreasing one towards the tail. They were singing and seemed cheerful, glad enough no doubt to be on their way back to their homes. There were a great many sick, mostly with fever and dysentery brought on by the hardships of the campaign, bad food and worse water. The water supply was ample for a much larger force, but there seemed to be no care taken to keep the streams clean, and in some places dead animals were allowed to rot in them, or to be in close proximity to the pure water springs, which would have given an unfailing supply of good quality. The water round Barachit was simply loathsome from the number of dead oxen.

The supplies of beef for the troops would have been ample if proper care had been taken of the animals. The oxen were driven up with the army, and nearly all had been imported from Egypt, Syria, or the Red Sea ports; they left very likely in fair condition from the coast, but every day they got thinner and more out of condition the further they marched. There was no grass for them except in the water meadows, which are few and far between. Then the rinderpest broke out among them and they died like flies, and before the march was half over the animals became dangerous food and the flesh from them was nearly black.

On my arrival at Chersober I found Colonel Slade ill with dysentery, and that the Adigrat garrison and the prisoners taken at Adowa by Ras Mangesha, Ras Aloula, Ras Sebat, and Hagos Taferi were to come in that afternoon. General Baldissera asked me to go out with him to see them come in, and he said how sorry he was that he had had to detain me in the rear, and spoke of the

dangers that were to be feared on the advance, at which I smiled, and so did he in return. I found out afterwards that there was never any intention of the Abyssinians to oppose the advance, and that the before-mentioned leaders who gave up their prisoners had not 6000 men under arms, nearly all their men having returned to their homes.

The Italian garrison of Adigrat and the prisoners had all been furnished with new clothes that had been sent on to them, and instead of the majority of them looking very thin and ill they seemed to be in good condition, and in their new clothes compared most favourably with the relieving force in their travel-stained and ragged uniforms. There were, however, many invalids suffering from malarial fever, typhus, dysentery, and other complaints, and a few cases of small-pox among the native troops. I brought out some cigarettes, oranges and lemons, and they were soon gone. One of the Italian officers who had been a prisoner talked English, and he said the cigarette I had given him was the first he had smoked for three months. I find nearly all the Italian officers understand French, and many of them speak it very well. The prisoners had on the whole been treated kindly, much better than they had expected, but some had been struck and beaten by the Abyssinian soldiers, which was not to be wondered at, but I heard of no right down cruelty being perpetrated.

On my return I sat under the giant sycamore fig-tree (which must be centuries old) at the top of the Chersober pass, and looked at the scene of desolation which was before me, everywhere burnt villages and destruction. The large village at the bottom of the pass with its once well-built houses and its large church were blackened ruins. What a tale this old tree could tell if it could only speak, and what curious sights it must have seen. The Portuguese must have made use of this road. Mahomed Grayn with his victorious Moslem army. Many Abyssinian armies during the centuries of bloodshed that have existed when fights for the throne were so numerous must have gone up or down the pass. The English expedition made use of it, as the remains of the English road are still visible within a few yards of this tree, and many an Englishman must have rested under its shade. Now the Italians are here and will soon retire. Who will be the next invader that it will look upon and shelter?

The road along the high ridge from Mai-marat to Chersober

was made by the English, and from it in places most wonderful glimpses are to be obtained of the surrounding country, which is very lovely in spite of its being all dried up and little vegetation to be seen. In one hour's march views are obtained of the valleys of three rivers with three different drainages. The first view is of the most southern tributaries of the Mareb that runs past Kassala, then those of the Mai-Muna, Ouffet and Ragulai, which lose themselves in the burning sands of the northern Danakil country, to continue in an underground bed to the Red Sea; and then the upper waters of the Ghiva river, that runs into the Tacazze, and then on to the Nile, which empties itself into the Mediterranean. At one place the distance between the springs of the Ghiva and Ragulai cannot be more than a mile apart, and where they empty themselves in the sea is about 1000 miles distant.

Owing to the crowded state of the road on our return to Dongolo from Chersober, we took an hour and a half longer doing the distance than in coming up. I had camp arranged and tea going long before the headquarters had their tents pitched, although their luggage was ahead of ours. We had a nice afternoon tea to which General Baldissera came, and many of his staff officers. Another big storm over the Mareb valley and the Hamasen was going on, and luckily for the Italian soldiers we have escaped all the rain that has been falling to our west; it is cold enough as it is at night time, and if we had it damp, disease of all sorts would be terrible, and the roads would be turned into bogs, and marching would be very difficult.

There were a few shots fired at the outposts during the night, evidently by the villagers who had had their houses burnt. They did not interest me as I had seen on the march several natives, old friends of mine from Adowa, who told me that there were now no soldiers nearer than Axum, as it was impossible to live near Adowa, owing to the frightful stench from the battlefield, and hardly any of the population of the town remained, just one or two servants to look after the property. The march from Dongolo to Senafe was the most trying one I ever made, and I never wish again to undergo such an experience. The whole first division had to get down the narrow Guna-guna pass, which was a most tedious proceeding, artillery and infantry all mixed up in confusion with the small transport train and the invalids. A hundred good rifle shots among the rocks and thick bush above would have done terrible execution and made the confusion worse,

and they could have retired by either flank without ever getting into the open.

I amused myself as customary, when going up and down this road, by looking at the positions that might easily have been held and checks given to an advancing army, which would have suffered heavily, and inflicted little loss on the defenders. Taking from Adi-Caia to Adigrat, the Cascasse pass leading to Senafe might easily have been defended, and could only have been got through by firing volleys into the bush as the defenders' positions were secure behind rocks and bush, and the nearly smokeless powder that the Abyssinians now have in their cartridges leaves little indication of the position of the shooter. The country from Senafe to Barachit is more open, with the exception of a commanding ridge covered with boulders and scrub that dominates the road to the east, just before the open land at Barachit is reached. The heights round the Guna-guna valley and pass are admirably suited for defence, and here on the march up some few of the Agamé villagers fired on the Italians. From Mai-marat ridge to the Chersober pass every inch of the road might have been disputed, and the crest of the ridge lined. It is impossible to outflank the Cascasse, Guna-guna and Chersober positions as the bush is so thick, and there are no commanding positions from where they might be shelled. The sides of the ridges towards the road are fairly open; their creeks are covered with vegetation and rocks and their reverse sides are thickly wooded, offering no hindrance to irregular troops, but impossible for regular troops to get through quickly.

The whole of the roads I have seen in Abyssinia are most difficult for a civilised invader to get over, and should he once meet with a reverse and have to retire, escape out of the country would be very difficult. Military men who took part in the Abyssinian campaign will know very well what I mean, and the history of the rear-guard that covered the return of the troops from Magdala should not be forgotten. It is, however, very different now to what it was then, as formerly few Abyssinians possessed firearms, and what they had were antiquated weapons, while at present nearly every countryman has a breech-loading rifle with a fairly long range. I managed after getting down the Guna-guna pass, by making a detour and a cut across country, to strike the road that runs into the village of Efessi on Goose plain, and got away from the dust, stench of dead transport animals,

and the swarms of flies which were a terrible nuisance. I could see the long line of dust which marked the route of the first division, and was glad I was out of it. I pitied the soldiers and the poor invalids; many of the sick had to be carried, and it was painful to see their attempts at keeping off the flies that buzzed around their litters and settled on their faces in swarms. A thin, dirty hand holding a few leaves languidly waving backwards and forwards in the attempt to keep them off, and then subsiding at the unequal combat.

I managed to get camp pitched and tea ready long before the head-quarter staff arrived, and General Baldissera was very pleased to come and have some, and chaffed me about the English custom of having tea at five o'clock. I have always tried when I have been campaigning to arrange to get tea in the afternoon at about that hour, by sending forward a boy with the necessaries and a big kettle, to light a fire and boil some water, also to choose some nice shady tree under which we could halt, and a five minutes' rest is perhaps all that is required to eat a few sweet biscuits and to get through a cup of tea. I shall never forget the surprise and the satisfaction of an English general on finding a cup of tea ready waiting him, in what he thought was an enemy's country, and which I knew was perfectly safe.

I called at the village of Efessi, on a native friend of mine, and got fresh milk, eggs, chickens and two fat sheep. His live stock were all shut up and hidden in an inner room in his house, as he was frightened of being made to sell it at the low price which the Italians gave for everything. They went on an entirely wrong principle in the country by fixing prices too low. I never paid an extortionate price for anything, but gave the countrymen what I considered a fair rate at which they were willing to sell. When I first arrived at Adi-Caia nothing could be got in the market, owing to the list of prices for articles being fixed at too low a price, and the Italian soldiers taking things from the peasantry on the road to market. As soon as the two divisions had gone to the front I spoke to Count Radicati, who commanded there, regarding the total absence of fresh supplies, when there were plenty of things to be obtained in the country, and he made the market free. The consequence was, we soon had all sorts of things brought in, and lived very well. Chickens, eggs, milk, fresh meat of good quality and a few vegetables

proved a great boon to the sick that were in hospital, and the natives seeing that they were not molested any further, soon gained confidence.

The only Italians that seemed to me to use any tact were the officers who had been some time in the country, and they are all a most intelligent and gentlemanly set, thoroughly knowing how to treat the natives, who are really more like grown-up children than anything else. A kind word goes a long way with them, and an interest in their welfare and a short chat, even with the poorest, soon makes them friendly and willing to help, or to procure anything that it is possible to be got in their country. There is no place that I have been to that the old saying, "Familiarity breeds contempt," is more applicable than in Abyssinia, and next to that losing one's temper. Many of the Abyssinians are only too pleased to see a man get in a rage and lose his temper, as it is a source of amusement to them; and an Italian officer at Adi-Caia was always losing his, and I used to watch groups of natives laughing at him. I believe they used to come daily on purpose to see him, the same as the children do at home when a Punch and Judy Show is going on, and I think they enjoyed it just as much. He was a good-sized, red-faced, fat man, and very conceited.

We had to wait five days at Senafe, to allow the troops of the second division to get down to the coast; they were kept as much as possible up in the mountains, as the heat was terrific in the low country, and only made the march down the good road from Asmara to Sahaati in the cool of the day. They entrained at Sahaati and went straight on board the transports at Massowah, which took them back to Italy. The first division then had to do the same. I remained one night at Adi-Caia, and dined with Colonel Radicati and his staff, and I was sorry to say goodbye to him. He had been most kind to me during my long sojourn with him, and he had done everything he could to make me comfortable, giving me the Court house to live in, which I soon made a fairly good dwelling house out of. I had a very good cook with me, and could always give a better dinner than what the officers could get, and I always had guests at breakfast and dinner, and the Italian officers used to do the best they could in return.

Natives from all the district round, many of them who knew me before, used to pay me visits, and no day was too

long.* I learnt much valuable information regarding the Italian native policy, and what they had done in the country. Taking the majority of the opinions of the natives, they seemed fairly contented with the Italian rule, but they nearly all complained on minor points and of the general insecurity, but all these were of easy remedy with a slight change of policy. The people of this district had been looted by Ras Mangesha's army on his advance and retreat from Coatit in 1895, and were reduced to the last stages of poverty.

The hospital at Adi-Caia was crowded with patients mostly suffering from enteric fever and dysentery, brought on by the hardships of the campaign, the bad food and the total want of sanitary arrangements. The cemetery, which only held two or three graves when I left for Adigrat, was now covered with many crosses made of rough bits of wood. The highest mortality in one day was twenty-eight and the average about ten to twelve. Sanitary arrangements at all the camps were simply nil, and no latrines were made; the watering-places were allowed to get very dirty, and there were no slaughtering-places; the bullocks, sheep and goats were killed anywhere, very often on foul ground, and the offal and hides were left unburied, and in twenty-four hours the camps became quite offensive.

I left Adi-Caia for Asmara on the afternoon of the 27th, and arrived there on the 29th, after twenty-one hours marching. By some mistake the Italian soldier in charge of our baggage took the road to Halai, while we marched *via* Mai-Sarou and Decca Maharie, and I did not see it again till I arrived at Asmara. Fortunately the weather was fine, as, if it had been wet and no change of clothes to be had, fever would have been the result. The Italians have constructed a newer and better road than what is marked on the maps, and it may prove hereafter very useful to the countrymen to bring their produce to market at Asmara, as it opens up good cultivated ground and also a thickly bushed country, which is capable of being cleared and carrying a large population, as there are plenty of streams and springs that come from the Halai mountains, that can be used for irrigation purposes. At present it is uninhabited and swarms with small game. I saw marks of leopard, pig, defasa or

* The Italian officers used to come and chaff me about my native friends, but all the same they were very glad to get information and be able to obtain fresh supplies, and find out that the country was perfectly safe, and they used to be very glad to go for picnics, instead of kicking their heels about camp with nothing to do.

water-buck and Kudoo antelope, and sighted several duiker and oribi. On leaving Adi-Caia I had as a guide a small boy of about ten years old, and he took me over a short cut over one of the spurs of the Halai range, and just when it got dark I thought he had lost the road; but we soon came into it again, and we then halted for an hour until the moon rose, and then continued our journey and got into camp at Mai-Sarou at ten o'clock at night, after seven hours good marching.

Mai-Sarou is a very pretty little place with an inexhaustible supply of good water, which runs to the Mareb; consequently there is good grass in the water-meadows and plenty of cultivation. From an hour out from Adi-Caia to Mai-Sarou, that is for about six hours march, the country is uninhabited. I asked my small guide if he was not frightened of robbers, as we were both unarmed, and he replied, no, as there were only a few in the country and they were his relations, and they would not touch anyone that was with him. They could only get from me my mule, clothes, a few dollars, watch, pocket-book and compass, and it would not have been worth their trouble to have touched me. I have had plenty of experience of these border-robbers, and they are not half-bad people, more like our Robin Hoods of ancient days. They are generally people who have had to clear out for some petty crime or debt which they are not rich enough to settle, and, therefore, take to the highways, and levy blackmail on people coming from a distance, sparing all those that live in the neighbourhood.

What strikes one mostly on the road from Mai-Sarou to past Decca Maharie, which is on the Kiagour end of the Gura plateau, are the splendid specimens of the sycamore fig tree under which 500 to 600 men can easily find shade. The Abyssinians say they are never struck by lightning, and certainly in all my wanderings I have never come across one that shewed any traces of having been hit, but have seen smaller trees of other species situated alongside of them shattered by lightning. These trees at Mai-Sarou are very fine specimens, and on arriving at them, although it was past ten o'clock at night, I was hailed by an Italian engineer officer, Captain Ercule, a friend of mine, who was in charge of the water supply and the new road, and he immediately did all he could for a hungry and clotheless traveller, and after a good supper I went to bed thoroughly tired out. The next morning, after a very nice breakfast

with plenty of coffee and good fresh milk, we said good-bye to our hospitable host and started for Decca Maharie a good eight hours' march. Captain Ercule had been in the colony a long time, and had done a lot of useful work in the Public Works Department. He was one of the few Italian officers who read and wrote Amharic, the written language of the country, and was not only a very clever officer but a most gentlemanly and intelligent companion.

Two hours out of our camping place we passed Sabanigad, the road being up hill and through a good deal of cultivation. Some rain had fallen here, and the trees and flowers were just getting green and coming into bloom, a great contrast to the dry and parched up country we had hitherto been travelling in ; my companions began altering their idea of the country, and that the dry fields and trees without leaves were green occasionally. There is nothing green to be seen in an arable country in England in the winter, and also nothing in Abyssinia in the dry season, except the evergreen trees that do not lose their leaves.

Sabanigad is also famous for its enormous sycamore fig-trees, and soon after passing them the Mai-Kumol, a small perennial stream, is crossed, and then in another hour's march the Mai-Melahass, another stream of the same description, is come to ; between these two waters is the village of Adida. Crossing the Mai-Melahass, Haha church is reached, and after a short up-hill march and then a descent the fertile Gura plateau is come to, and three hours march across this takes one into Decca Maharie, where there was a commissariat store situated under some more big sycamore fig-trees.

The battle field at Gura where the Abyssinians defeated the Egyptians is on the southern part of the plateau, where a pass leads up from the Mareb valley, and is about two hours march south of Decca Maharie. A stony ridge of rocks of fantastic shapes lines the western border of the Gura plateau, and then chains of broken hills increasing in height divides the Gura plateau from that of the grand upper plateau of the Hamasen. Another hearty welcome from the Italian officers stationed at Decca Maharie, and their kindness is too great for words. They did us very well and I must say I shall always remember my night there. I slept in one of the stores, on a bed of hay with only one blanket. It was bitter cold and the rats held high carnival, racing, playing, and squeaking the whole night

long, and running over me and another Italian officer who was also sleeping in the store. There is nothing really objectionable in an Abyssinian rat, as he is perfectly clean and not like a European rat, being more like the jerbille of the Soudan and Arabia, but still they are not pleasant running over one's face at night time. The road from Decca Maharie for some way is up hill, and through what used to be once a thickly populated and therefore cultivated country, and then the uninteresting wind-swept Hamasen plateau is reached, with its flat-topped and mole-hill shaped elevations, that belonging to the late General Kirkham near Asmara, where he had his farm, being a most conspicuous landmark for miles round.

I remember on one occasion in the middle of the seventies coming up to the Asmara plateau from Massowah. We had followed a small native path as soon as we had struck the foot hills, and the only small open space we had seen was Ghinda. The road was very steep and bad, alternately up and down the mountain and the last ascent the steepest of all. One of my Arab servants who had never been in a mountainous country before and had lived all his life in the hot plains of Arabia and the Soudan remarked, on reaching the plateau, "Allah be praised, we are now on the top of the world." The Hamasen plateau strikes one as being very flat after the contrast from the mountainous country which has to be gone through before arriving at its summit. It has no elevation more than 500 feet above the plain which is very fertile, and by the number of the ruined villages it must have carried an enormous population before the Egyptians commenced their attempts at annexation. Its general altitude is from 6500 to 7500 feet above the sea level, but many points are much higher; as for example at Asmara, the highest point being at least 800 feet higher than the lowest depression.

The Italians have greatly improved the vicinity of Asmara in many ways and have built some very good houses. Fort Baldissera, constructed on a hill to the south-west of the town, is a very large place, perfectly impregnable, and could only fall by starvation. The military stores are fine well-made buildings, and the hospital barracks and other public buildings do the Italians great credit. There is also a very good military Club House, and it only wants a few years of peace and the lavish riches of the land, agricultural and others developed, to make this settlement a very important place, as it will always be the permanent seat of Government, on

account of its healthy climate. It is in telegraphic communication with Massowah, and there is a daily post to the seaport. What strikes one is the absence of trees and shade, but this is being remedied, and no doubt when the railway is finished coal will greatly take the place of wood as fuel. Like in the Soudan wood is getting scarcer every year round the majority of Abyssinian towns, owing to the constant felling of timber and never planting trees, also to the gradual deforestisation of the country caused by fires lighted by the countrymen to clear the weeds from their fields, which spread to the jungle and then very often miles of country are burnt.

I was very glad to settle down at Asmara for a short spell. The campaign was over, and there was no chance of any more fighting, and the Italian prisoners were all in Southern Abyssinia, with the exception of a few scattered about in Tigré, who Ras Mangesha and the Choum of Waag had promised to release. Colonel Slade was returning to England as he was too ill to proceed to Kassala owing to the intense heat, and besides there was absolutely nothing going on there, the dervishes having retired from its vicinity after their last defeats at the hands of Colonel Stephani and his forces.

There was nothing to be learnt from the advance to Adigrat and the way the Italians conducted their expedition. They are far behind the English in military knowledge regarding campaigning in Africa; and their commissariat, transport, and medical departments are of the crudest and most primitive description. Their native troops are decidedly good and have fought well on every occasion that they have been under fire, never giving the dervishes a chance in any engagement, although they have been more numerous. Their discipline is not as high as that of the black battalions in the Egyptian service, nor are they as smart to look at on parade, but they can be kept well in hand by their officers, and do not get as excited as the Soudanese blacks, who are too eager and their officers have a difficulty occasionally in restraining them.

The Italian native troops are nearly all mountaineers and are therefore more adapted to fighting in Abyssinia than the plain men and they are individually much better shots, many of them being game hunters from the time they were old enough to fire off a rifle. They make most efficient scouts and they have very keen eyesight, and they perform the work

that the English would do with cavalry. There are many of these men that will get over this broken and bushy country just as fast as a horseman, and the marches that bodies of these men have made in different parts of the colony have been noted for their rapidity. The march from Kassala to Senafe which I mentioned before being by no means one of their quickest.

I do not believe that the English regular soldiers would have been capable of performing the march to Adigrat and back, if they had had to undertake it under the same commissariat and other circumstances as the Italians. Firstly, they would not be expected to do it; and secondly, no English general would have dared to advance or ask his troops to undertake such a campaign with such meagre provisions. Officers and men were deserving of the greatest praise for everything, and did the best they possibly could with the poor means at their command. I found the officers an intelligent, gentlemanly and hard working set, and the soldiers willing, docile and patient under their terrible sufferings. The campaign served the purpose for which it was intended and was therefore a success; had the advance of the relieving army been disputed, it might have had a very different history.

The Italians doubtless have learnt several lessons during their last two campaigns: namely, that their artillery is not powerful enough, and that they want guns of longer range to search out the positions that their enemy can hold and to better cover their attack or retreat; that machine and quick-firing guns are also absolutely necessary to accompany their fighting line, as better results are obtained from them when their target is a massed force of the enemy, or when their foe is attacking on open ground. In any future campaign that may be undertaken they must always look forward to being greatly outnumbered, and therefore to put them on a better footing quantities of machine guns will be necessary. No advance should be made unless proper depots, which should be strongly fortified, are made on the frontier, and that every pass on the road should be properly guarded by commanding redoubts, and if possible the roads through the passes improved so that blocks are impossible and the disorder, which formerly was so prevalent, done away with.

There was a want of ammunition at the front on the Adowa campaign, and no army could hold its own against the Abyssinian hordes unless it had sufficient cartridges to keep them from closing, as in hand to hand fighting no Euro-

pean is a match for these mountaineers when outnumbered to the extent of three or four to one. The Abyssinian has attacked fortified positions but has never succeeded in taking them when they have been properly defended by men with plenty of ammunition, so acting on the defensive is always a better game to play with them than attacking. If any attack becomes necessary it should only be done after a heavy and demoralising shell fire has been given, as the Abyssinians and Gallas stand greatly in awe of properly served cannon. The Italian guns are a great improvement on what have hitherto been used, but still they might have a longer range, and they must take into consideration that the French will always supply King Menelek with the very latest inventions, as they know that the guns can only be used against either Italy or England; so they should watch carefully what artillery is imported, and try and bring a superior weapon into the field the next time hostilities commence.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM ASMARA TO ADI-QUALA.

THERE was nothing of interest at Asmara during General Baratieri's trial, and everyone knew that the Court of Inquiry that took place would end in a very unsatisfactory manner, and it was useless thinking that the details of the reason why the forward march to Adowa from Entiscio was made, would be given to the public. If the truth had been wanted to be known, the trial ought to have taken place in Italy, and not in Erithrea. It is not a very hard thing to plead a case that was patent to all, and no one knew it better than the man who was held primarily responsible for the disaster. There was hardly a vestige of defence, and the only course to adopt was to acknowledge a defeat attributed to no fault of the material, but to being greatly outnumbered by an enemy armed perhaps just as well as the Italian troops, and with longer range artillery. When a force is outnumbered to the extent of five to one by a quicker moving and more mobile foe that can throw an overwhelming number of soldiers (the majority of them being invisible owing to the nature of the ground, until about the last four hundred yards) on to any point quicker than that point can be reinforced, there can only be one result, and the whole of the members of the Court of Inquiry were of the same opinion, and they all knew that if they had been in the same position as General Baratieri, they would perhaps have done the same, namely, have gone forward, and relied on those at home who ordered the advance to pull them through. A great deal might be written on this subject, but it would serve no purpose, and only cause ill feeling; but in justice to General Arimondi who fought so bravely, he was leading troops that he had never campaigned with before, he having always commanded the native troops who also fought under a disadvantage, by being led by a general who was not used to them. It was, in my opinion, no use blaming General Albertone for the disaster who was not there to defend him-

self, and this was about all that was done, and he was blamed for not making a more stubborn resistance; this I found out afterwards was impossible, and even the Abyssinian generals acknowledge that further resistance by him and the survivors that were with him was useless, and it would only have entailed the massacre of the living and the wounded.

The generals all left for Italy after the Court of Inquiry was over, and Asmara began to quiet down and occupy itself with commercial pursuits that had been put a stop to by the campaign. I was busy getting ready my transport for my journey into Abyssinia to find out facts about what had taken place, and full details as to the state of the country, but I was greatly delayed by being refused permission to go across the frontier until General Baldissera heard further about what was going on in Abyssinia, and the arrival of King Menelek at Adese Ababa. Nothing could be kinder than the way I was treated by all the Italian officers and officials, and I shall always remember their courtesy to me, which I shall never be able to repay.

Very few of my old Asmara friends were alive, but their children had grown into men, and I received many attentions from them, and a good deal of information. I think that from all the evidence I could collect, that the natives were contented with Italian rule. When I first knew the town it was only a collection of badly constructed houses, situated around the old church, and the cultivated fields came up to the village; now good roads had been made in every direction, culverts over the waterways, and good bridges over the streams. Fort Baldissera occupied the hill that commands the plateau on the south and west, and was a very strong fortress; this was the furthest inhabited point, and the camp underneath the fortress was capable of holding many thousands of men. It was perfectly impregnable against any native army, and the large number of fire-proof store-houses for all sorts of provisions and munitions of war, would allow it to hold out for a long time, and no Abyssinian army could reduce it as they would starve long before the garrison.

Very good European barracks had been built, and the Italian soldier was just as well off in Asmara as he was in the home barracks in Italy, and much better off as a rule than he was in his own private home. The lines for the native troops were not nearly so good, and not to be compared to what I have been accustomed to see in the far East or in the Soudan, and here I think the Italians have not paid

enough attention to their native troops, as housing them properly makes them respect their personal appearance, and a perfectly spick and span native soldier does not come out of a very dirty house, and as a rule slovenly in person means slovenly in work.

The General's house and those belonging to the higher officials would do credit to any colony, and the club is also well built. There is not a decent hotel in the place, and the shops are poor to look at, but contain very good provisions. Trees were beginning to be planted, but a good selection had not been made, and the importation of Italian conifers was a failure; it would have been better to have chosen the best of the native trees, such as the Wanza giant juniper, and the more hardy of the ficus which grow rapidly. I saw a great difference in the scenery round Asmara since I first knew it, everyone has cut down and no one has planted, and as soon as the Italians start an "arbor day" and make it a Government holiday, the better it will be for the colony. The environs of Asmara were formerly fairly wooded, and with the exception of two or three trees in the native town there is not a vestige of bush or wood to be seen with the exception of castor oil plants. After the rains when the crops are growing on the plateau, there is something green to be seen, but in May and early June it looks all burnt up. Ras Aloula's house built on the nearest hill to the south of the town is still left standing and has been taken by the Government. General Kirkham's house is on the next ridge further south and nearly in ruins. I can remember when his property was well kept and quite a nice place.

The climate of Asmara is very good, and it is never really warm in the hottest part of the year. Being on a wind-swept high plateau and no sheltering trees it is very dusty, but this can be remedied in time, and could be made a perfect place in comparison to the infernal hot and damp climate of Massowah. There is no reason why it should not make a good place for agricultural people to come to, but although the Italians make good colonists and peaceful unoffending people in strange lands, they have not as yet learnt how to found a colony of their own. On lower slopes than Asmara where there is plenty of water, they have already made good fruit and vegetable gardens, and all the European flowers do splendidly. The vegetables for size and flavour could not be beaten in any country, and I enjoyed delicious salads during the whole of my stay there. All the European and

Abyssinian cereals do well, and the colony should before long not only be a self-supporting one, but have a surplus for exportation to the grain-consuming markets of the Red Sea. An extension of the Massowah Sahaati line is projected, and if it is brought up to the high plateau, the question of transport will be decided, which is at present the great drawback to proper commercial development. The further one gets along the Hamasen plateau the more fertile the country becomes, and there are several millions of acres on the upper plateau alone that are capable of being put under cultivation. There used to be plenty of good water meadows, and if the local population of this country have forgotten how to irrigate and lay out these meadows, there are plenty of Abyssinians on the other side of the border that would come and settle and help to cultivate the land. No expensive European engineers are required for this work, as the natives of Abyssinia thoroughly understand terrace cultivation and irrigation, and hardly waste a drop of water. Many of the springs that were formerly made use of have became choked up with a rank vegetation and the water runs away underground without being made use of.

The Hamasen used to be known by the name of the plain of the thousand villages, and its ruin was due to the Egyptians, and that arch traitor and ruffian Ras Waled-el-Michael. The latter killed the men and the former took the women and children and sold them as slaves, and when I first went to the Red Sea as British Vice-Consul with headquarters at Jeddah, the Hedjaz was full of Abyssinian females of all sizes, mothers of families and small girls that had been taken from the Hamasen. The prettier girls were fetching very high prices as the Abyssinians, when once they forget their freedom and that they were Christians, settle down to a harem life and their masters get very attached to them as they are not so cold-blooded as the Arab female. Many a Turk, Egyptian or Arab official is the offspring of an Abyssinian woman, and even the Italian prefers living in the state so well described by Rudyard Kipling in his pretty story of "Without Benefit of Clergy," to bringing one of his own countrywomen from Italy, consequently there is a mixed race already commencing, and it will be very interesting to know how they will turn out. The children seem very strong and healthy and extremely good-looking, the girls more so than the boys. With the open-air life they lead, and plenty of exercise, and a certain amount of education,

they should not prove a failure like the cross between the negro and European.

At last I got permission to start from Asmara and went to say good-bye to General Baldissera who was as usual kindness itself, and he asked me if I was determined to be foolish enough to go into Abyssinia to let his frontier officer at Adi-Quala know anything that might prove interesting. I had quite a number of Italian officers to see me off, and I got well chaffed, and they all said either we shall not see you again or you will never come back. They were quite right about not seeing me again, but a little out as to not getting out of the country. It was a long and difficult journey, but I managed at last to reach the sea coast at Zeilah after seven months' travelling and being entirely cut off from the civilised world. I saw one English newspaper in July 1896 and the next at Zeilah in January 1897, many things having happened in that time.

It was impossible to send letters in safety as the Abyssinian guards in the north had orders to detain all correspondence and destroy the letters, and everyone was searched and their goods as well. One of my men that I sent with a large bundle of letters managed to get past the Abyssinian guards at night time, but only to be swept away and lost by a flood in the Mareb river. I did not believe the news at first, but I found out after some time that it was really true, and that not only my messenger but several others that were crossing at the same time were drowned during one of the terrible spates for which this river is famed. On another occasion, when my servant Hadgi Ali was returning from Erithrea he managed to save three Abyssinian merchants in the Mareb, and there was nothing that these people would not do for him afterwards. Hadgi Ali is more like a fish in the water than a man, and started life as a "Heave for a dive, Sah," alongside the mail boats at Aden, at which he made money and is now a prosperous man. He was very daring, and I used to warn him against crocodiles, saying they were worse than sharks when bathing in some of the Abyssinian rivers. He had never seen a crocodile and did not believe in their being dangerous, but soon afterwards a narrow escape from a big one made him more careful, and I shall never forget his look and the choice Arabic expressions he used when he saw a donkey taken away while swimming across a river (we had a good sight of it as the crocodile took it by the neck).

The road we followed from Asmara to the south was a very fair one, and waggons can be used as far as the Italian fort of Adi-Ugri, near Goodofelasie. I was travelling through a country I knew every inch of, and I was sorry to see the ruin of many happy villages that formerly existed. The only two that showed any signs of prosperity were Adiquada and Seladaro; at the latter we encamped. The rains had not set in on the 10th June, although there were several rain and thunderstorms locally. We left Seladaro fairly early and continued our route through the wild olive forest to Checut which was also in ruins, and then down over the sources of the Mareb to Debaroa, a famous old town once, but now with a tumbledown appearance and nearly uninhabited. It has a large mound of debris quite close to it which, I am certain, contains ruins.

The road after Debaroa then opened out into the Teremnie plain and gave me a glimpse of the strong fortress of Adi-Tchlai, Ras Aloula's old stronghold, and Adi-Saul with its wonderful sycamore fig-trees, both to the west of the main road. Teremnie plain used to be well cultivated and carried very large herds and flocks of cattle, but it is now abandoned and the plain tenanted by a few antelope only. I camped at my favourite resting-place at the top of the water meadows in a clump of trees, and then went off to the village to see if any of my old friends were still alive. I found the old choum Berhanie Wad Johannes still in existence, but in very reduced circumstances on account of the cattle disease and the famine. He was very glad to see me and we began talking about old times; he asked after the Admiral Hewett who had been very good to him, and I told him he was dead, and I asked after some of my native friends, and they were either dead or gone away, and the changes that had taken place had been many. He seemed very contented with the Italians, but he told me things about the land which I was to verify next day; the action of the Government had not reached his district, and he was in hopes it never would. I bought provisions in the village cheaper than at Asmara, but still very dear for Abyssinia; on former occasions when I had visited the place they would not have cost the tenth of the sum.

My mules were all very naughty in the morning, and would not be caught, and they galloped from one end of the water meadows to the other, and had it not been for an Italian police sergeant with his mounted native escort, we never

should have caught them, as it was, we did not get away till noon. The Italian police force in Erithrea is a very fine one and have little or nothing to do, as the population are so peaceful; they are well paid and well mounted on good mules but have very few horses left, and the Italian native cavalry cease to exist as a mounted force, owing to the horse disease which started the same time as the rinderpest.

When peace is finally settled between Italy and Abyssinia, Erithrea will be a very inexpensive colony to govern, as it will require few permanent troops, and a good militia could be formed out of the Abyssinian peasantry who need only be called out in the slack time of the year in September before their crops are ripe. The number of civilians required to govern the districts need not be large, as the best way to levy taxes is through the choums of the different villages, and they are not likely to be able to oppress the cultivators, as they will be told what their taxes will be. The moment the Soudan is pacified, there will be no cause for fear from that country along the whole of the border, and the settlement of Abyssinian affairs cannot take many more years, as it depends on the life of the present ruler, and then civil war amongst the claimants to the throne, which the priests and peasantry may combine to put down. Italy has no cause to be frightened of the priests as long as she does not allow Roman Catholic Missions to try and win over the Abyssinians to that faith, and if their clergy were given to understand that they were not to be interfered with by the Roman Catholic missionaries, but on the contrary, that they should be helped to improve their own faith, their churches and church land, and encouraged to go to Jerusalem so that their ideas should be widened, and while at that city should be under the protection of the Italian Consul, they would not only receive the help of the Abyssinian clergy in Erithrea but be welcomed over the border when they wanted to push their frontier further forward, which they must do some day.

After leaving Teremnie I rode along with a train of transport waggons going to Adi-Ugri which I passed, so did not go over the fort. I never feel free inside a fortress and it is the last place to get news from. I knew there was a hearty welcome for me there, but I wanted to hear what the countrymen had to say, so I only stopped at a Greek café, had an excellent little meal, and bought a lot of good white bread from the Greek baker, and went on to look at the Italian agricultural settlement, and encamped near the largest village of the

Goodofelasie district, south of Adi-Ugri. I sent up one of my servants to tell the choum, if he was the same man that I knew before, that I should be glad to see him next morning. I had only got camp properly arranged, and everything under cover for a storm that was coming on, when the choum arrived with presents of food, tedj, and a sheep, which I did not want, as I had plenty of my own, and as the storm then burst, I made him remain while I had my dinner. He was very polite, and commenced by holding his shamma up before the door of my tent to keep me from the evil eye. I told him I was not frightened of it, as my servants were thoroughly good and I expected his followers were the same. He replied that as all big men in his country liked being screened when they had their meals, that I might like to follow their customs. It was only an act of courtesy on his part, and to show that he was willing to do everything for me.

This choum was a very intelligent man, and he gave me his opinion regarding the land question which is worth noting; what he said was nothing very new or startling, but all the same it had the credit of being true. I have heard his opinion expressed before in the Soudan nearly in the same words, and I believe it wants an education like our Indian officials have had, both past and present, to thoroughly understand what the native feelings are on the land question; and they would say that they thoroughly sympathised with the choum and what he said, and if they administered India in the same way that we have hitherto tried to do with the Soudan, which unfortunately the Italians have copied, our hold over India would not be what it is at the present moment. In Abyssinia, ever since it had a history the land has always belonged to individual people representing the head of a family or to village communities, and worked jointly for the benefit of all, or in other words, it was more of a communistic business than anything else; the land was held without title-deeds, because no registration court existed and even the church lands were not defined, and the right to the land was by the knowledge of the local people, and all children were shown the marks which bounded the different properties; this is not unlike what takes place in the city of London to the present day.

If Italy claims the land in Abyssinia by right of conquest, it may be said that all private titles to landed property are invalid and no native has a right to anything; but what the choum complained of to me was, that neither he nor the

majority of the landowners fought against the Italians; on the contrary, they aided them under the idea that they would be treated fairly and that their property would be respected. That afternoon I passed through the new Italian agricultural settlement and I saw that they had the pick of the ground, and this was given to settlers from Italy, dispossessing those that had cultivated the land formerly, and whose ancestors might have worked on it for centuries. I have only given one isolated case in one district, but this had been done in other parts as well, and what confidence could the natives be expected to have in a government that started business on such a basis.

There is land in the Hamasen sufficient for all, and had the government taken what they required for fortifications and government offices nothing would have been said; and had they also issued a proclamation that all natives should be allowed to retain their cultivated property on having their claims registered, and also allowed grazing rights on the mountains, no difficulty would have arisen, and the government would have found that they had more territory than they knew what to do with. Abyssinia, in spite of all it has gone through, still has a very large population, and the people show a great vitality and have large families, so it is impossible to wipe them out like the Australian natives or New Zealanders. There is also no reason that I can see at present why the Christian population should diminish; on the contrary, there is every prospect of their increasing in number under a settled government; so the land question is one of the greatest importance, and as long as the Abyssinians are treated in a fair and equitable manner they will be found to make good and peaceful subjects, and the reverse if treated badly. I think when the English public learn the facts of our dealings with the land belonging to the natives in Africa that they will be thoroughly disgusted, and I think the wholesale seizure of land that has taken place in some parts is little removed if any from theft. I am sorry to use such a harsh term, but nothing milder will meet the case; these lands are given away to the first settler that comes along, and the native sees himself ousted and his liberties curtailed, and he begins to wish that he had not allowed the foreigner into the country in a peaceful manner.

I do not think the Italian government are so much to blame, as they had a precedent for it from what had hitherto been done by us in Africa; but still I consider it was dis-

honest and ill-advised, and I am afraid that there is a good deal of property held by people in Africa that the title-deeds would not bear looking into.

The Italian agricultural settlement here was a very poor affair, and the houses built for the settlers were simply a copy of the ordinary Abyssinian, round-shaped, with the addition of a fireplace and a chimney. They were neither clean nor sanitary, and their fittings were ill-arranged. The village was built round a square, and I looked in vain for good barns, storehouses and cattlesheds. No vestige of gardens had been attempted and not a tree had been planted. The agricultural implements were also mostly very poor, but I saw a fair specimen of a light iron plough for two oxen which was a great improvement on that in use by the natives, and broke up the ground quicker and better.

I had a long talk to a poor Italian who was ploughing, and he had about ten acres of ground under crop and was breaking up more ground hoping to get about twice the quantity of ground under cultivation before the rains made the ground too wet to work. His beans and peas were well up and looking healthy, and about a five acre patch of wheat left little to be desired. He complained of having lost some oxen by disease, and a nearly failure of his last crop by not knowing when to put the seed into the ground and on account of want of rain in the winter; he had also received a little damage from locusts. His wife and family of children had run away to the sea coast after the battle of Adowa, as they feared an invasion, and had not returned, and nearly all the other Italian cultivators had done the same. He thought that in time, when he got about fifty acres of land under cultivation, that he would be much better off in Abyssinia than he could ever hope to be in Italy, and that when his children got bigger that they would be able to help him greatly in his work. He could get the necessary education for them at Asmara, and he hoped in time that a small school would be opened at Adi-Ugri, so that he would not be separated from them. His only companion was a smart intelligent little Abyssinian boy of about ten years of age, the only one left of a family, the other members having died during the famine. The pair seemed to get on very well together, and the boy seemed very fond of his master. The Italians are very good to the Abyssinian children, and there can be no doubt that the rising generation will be friendly with the white folk; so there is every prospect of a future

for the colony and agriculture making great strides in the country by the two people naturally helping each other.

The road after Adi-Ugri is not fit for wheeled traffic, as the country begins to get more rocky and broken and there is one distinct outcrop of lava, but where the volcano is from which it came, I never could make out. The soil is still very fertile, and here the grass flowers and numerous lilies were very pretty; this district had received the rain which we saw falling on our march to Adigrat and was therefore in all its spring glory. On the road I met a very sad sight, namely several of the native soldiers who had been taken prisoners at Adowa and had suffered mutilation by having one hand and one foot cut off. I pitied these smart-looking young men; many of them would be cripples for life, as for want of proper treatment the arm and leg had become dangerously affected and they had lost entire use of them.

There were many hundreds of these cases in the hospitals at Asmara, and I often used to visit the hospitals and have a chat with them, and they seemed very thankful for a small present of tobacco or cigarettes and a few cheap sympathising words; as they nearly all talked Arabic I was entirely at home with them. Their officers used also to be very kind to them, and the Queen of Italy had at her own expense sent out a doctor, who was also a false limb maker, with a staff of four assistants, to mend these poor people up in the best manner possible, and a good many of them were already going about with false feet and walking fairly well without the aid of a stick. Some of them had hooks fitted to the stump of the arm where the wrist had been cut off, and others with a split contrivance which could be screwed together to hold various articles. They were to be employed by the government doing odd jobs, and several that I saw were already doing stable and other work. The officials did not know how many mutilated soldiers there were exactly, but they could not have numbered less than 1500. I sent a good many across the borders back to Erithrea. In the convoy was a mad Italian soldier who had lost his wits in Abyssinia, and I do not wonder at others having done the same, considering what they went through.

I did not go on to Adi-Quala but stopped in a nice little valley at Adi-Gana, about an hour and a half's march short and just under the village. I remained there two days, and then the Italian officer at Adi-Quala, who was acting for

Lieutenant Mulazzani, the frontier officer, came and fetched me to the Government station, saying that the Government had lost sight of me since the police sergeant saw me at Teremnie. He soon found out I was no stranger to the place, and was surprised at so many of his soldiers knowing me, and the greeting between his interpreter and myself. I had known the man ever since he was a child, and I think he gave me a good character as I was never bothered by the Italian officials again, and they were always glad to hear my opinion of the country, as I perhaps knew a great deal more about it and the Abyssinians than they knew themselves. The next day Lieutenant Mulazzani came back and informed me that the general did not wish me to go across the frontier just yet, and I was to consider myself his guest. He gave me a very nice, clean new house to live in alongside his own quarters, and the fortnight I remained there I enjoyed very much.

Adi-Quala itself is not a strong place, but the line of defence along the only path for many miles, both to east and west, is up the road from the Gundet valley about half an hour's ride from the camp. The zigzag road up is covered at every turn, and for the last 300 yards is not more than ten feet broad, with a sheer cliff impossible even for a monkey to scale on one side; a machine gun and a few rifles on the top would stop an army. In a few days after Lieutenant Mulazzani's arrival from Asmara I heard from Ras Aloula, who informed me that he was sending Mr Schimper to escort me to Axum, and he would be very glad to see me. Mr Schimper is the son of the late Professor Schimper, the great German botanist of Berlin, who passed over forty-five years in Abyssinia and married an Abyssinian wife. Mr William Schimper had received his education in Germany and is a very well informed man, speaking and writing German, Italian, and Amharic very well, and having a very fair knowledge of English, speaking and reading it better than he can write, and also talking Arabic; he is also a very useful man all round with his hands, a decent shot and sportsman, and knows a little on most subjects, and a charming companion. He was with me for nearly six months, and I was sorry for his sake and my own that he left me on his way down to the coast after seeing King Menelek, who afterwards had him arrested and beaten. Schimper complained of being homesick and that he had had a bad dream, and also that one of the wandering minstrels had sung things uncomplimentary to

him, saying that he would never succeed if he went to the coast and a lot more rubbish that superstitious people believe in, so he returned and got ill-treated instead of accompanying me and perhaps getting a good billet from the English officials.

Here we have an instance of a half-bred Abyssinian and European, a clever and well informed man, believing in old women's tales. King Menelek would not go to Axum and be crowned as he was afraid of some prophecy that he would be killed if he went there, and I could give numerous examples of what a curious race the Abyssinians are in this way, and they have the most absurd fancies and ideas. I have come across many foreign races that are superstitious and a good few Englishmen ; but as the days of miracles are over I believe that there does not exist a single thing that cannot be explained, and I believe in no omens at all, so I always look at a superstitious person as being unreliable and partly insane. My telegram arrived saying I could go away, and our last night was spent watching a terrible thunderstorm that came on just as we were going to bed and made sleep impossible. I shall always retain the most pleasant memories of my host Lieutenant Mulazzani and his great kindness to me, which I hope I shall be able some day to repay. As long as Italy has officers of this stamp and leaves them a free hand she need not despair of her Erithrean colony going wrong, and the country under their management would soon become a success in every way.

CHAPTER VII

AXUM

WE left Adi-Quala at 7.30 A.M., a very fine morning, and in the best of spirits, only too glad to get away and my only regret leaving Lieutenant Mulazzani behind; and I was glad we had a chance of meeting again at Ras Mangesha's at Abbi-Addi, as we were both to be present at some marriage festivities that were to take place there later on. We were followed out of the encampment by many friends, and we said good-bye at the top of the pass leading down into the Gundet valley. As soon as our friends had gone back I made everyone hurry on as quickly as possible, so as to get across the Mareb without delay as I feared being again stopped by some telegram, and once across the river, I could say circumstances over which I had no control prevented me from returning. The true story of what had taken place could only be learned in Abyssinia and not in Erithrea. Our small escort which we took from Adi-Quala had to be changed at Adi-Sayabou, the last village in the Gundet valley, for another to take us to the Mareb; so I made a short cut to this village, which is inhabited by Fituari Waldenkel, with a force of about 200 irregulars in Italian pay. I gave backsheesh to my guards that were leaving, at which they were greatly pleased, and then went to pay a visit to Waldenkel, who I had known before; he was delighted to see me, and wanted to detain me for the day and give a feast in my honour, which I refused, pleading that I was in a hurry. He gave me an oribi antelope which had been shot that morning, and offered me the hind leg of an immense kudoo that he had shot the evening before. Its horns were as fine as I had ever seen; these were also offered me, but they were too large to carry about, so I suggested he should keep them till my return, when I would stay and have a day or two's shooting with him.

I pushed on as rapidly as I could to the Mareb, crossed

over the bridge that spanned the river, and sat down under a tree and breathed more freely, as I had been constantly looking over my shoulder to see if I was being followed by some messenger to recall me. The Fituaris guard would not cross the bridge, as they did not know who might be hiding over on the Abyssinian side, and they returned back with a good present, saying that all my messengers and servants that I sent back across the frontier would be helped and well looked after. The moment my baggage came up we left the feverish bed of the river, and out of the valley on to the borders of the Lalah plain, to an old ruined Italian fort and post at Mehequan, which had been destroyed and burnt after the retreat from Tigré. Here we met Ras Aloula's escort with another messenger for me who wanted us to proceed at once, which I refused to do, and gave them a letter to the Ras saying I should be with him in two days' time, and that I had dismissed his escort as I was not afraid.

There has been a very great deal of nonsense published by people about the dangers of the bit of country between Adi-Quala and Gusherworka; certainly a Greek or two have been killed by the inhabitants, but mostly owing to their own fault, as they have been dressed as Abyssinians; merchants have also been attacked and looted, but this has been by people with a grievance, who rob strangers not Europeans, so as to bring the ruler of the province into disrepute. It is he who has to compensate the people who are robbed, and he has to wait till he catches the robber before he can repay himself. Masquerading by Europeans as a native is a great error; only Burton was entirely successful, and he got found out on two occasions. No black man could whiten his face and palm himself off as a European, and the best plan to adopt is always to travel as an Englishman, and be proud that you are one. Natives always think twice about robbing a European, and then if one goes with a nice manner, and is civil and firm, there is a great deal more chance of being left alone and of seeing things and being properly treated, than by aping the customs and manners of the people of the country.

The reason why the country round Lalah and the Mareb is not populated is that it is so unhealthy, being a low depression surrounded by high mountains, and fever is very prevalent. The heights round are populated, and the depression is very fertile, and some parts of it are cultivated

every year; it has no permanent night population, except in the dry season when the dhurra crops are ripening. All the patches of cultivation are very strongly zarebaed, and are proof against any animals except an elephant. There is plenty of game in this country; lion, leopard, pig, kudoo, water-buck, and many of the smaller antelopes and elephant come up from the lower Mareb country during the heavy rains.

I went out in the afternoon with my gun to get a shot at some guinea-fowl and francolin, and sighted an old sow (wart-hog) with seven very little pigs not bigger than a cat, so I gave up shooting and watched them. The little sucking pigs were amusing little beasts, playing about and chasing each other, and for a long time they were within a few yards of me, until their mother winded me and made off and disappeared into a hole in the ground under an old white ants' nest. I just got back to the ruined fort in time, as a thunderstorm came on at five o'clock and lasted till ten, and how it did rain; we managed to keep dry, as there was one room in the enclosure that was not burned down and was quite watertight. Sleep was impossible while the storm was going on, and the flashes of lightning and the thunder were simultaneous; one always feels so small while these storms last.

Next morning as usual the weather was fine, and by the time we got away at eight o'clock everything was fairly dry except the road, which was very muddy in places. It is always interesting travelling through a game country after a heavy rain, as all the old footprints of the animals have been washed away and clearly cut new ones are to be seen. Between Mehequan and the foot of Daro Tchlai mountain we saw the tracks of a leopard, hyenas, jackals, cats of many sorts, fennec fox, pig, five different sorts of gazelle including kudoo, rats, mice, hedge-hog, ratel, and many other animals, and of bustards large and small, guinea-fowl, francolin, etc.

We came across a number of natives, ploughing and sowing dhurra and making zarebas, and with the really good rains, crop prospects are unusually bright; the poor people sadly want a good season to put them on their legs again. Daro Tchlai district, which used to be so thickly populated and so well cultivated, is nearly deserted and the villages are in ruins. This is nearly all church property belonging to the priests of Adi-Aboona near Adowa.

We found the ascent from the plain in much better condi-

tion than what it used to be in 1884, the Italians having greatly improved the road; the Gasgorie pass at the top and the descent to Gusherworka being still rather bad in places owing to the recent heavy rains, and no one to make repairs as soon as the road commences to wash away. The villages on the level top of Daro Tchlai and the church were destroyed and not a soul to be seen. Here the grass and bush had all been fired by the Abyssinians the day of the battle of Adowa to burn out the Italian fugitives from the battlefield, who hid in and fired from the bush, and many must have reached this spot in safety only to get burnt to death in the jungle and high grass which at that time of the year was as dry as tinder. The trees on the road were just coming into leaf, and the young grass was springing up and nature looking at its best. We got into Gusherworka, which is about three miles from Adi-Aboona, just in time to get everything comfortable before the usual afternoon storm broke; the rain prevented the priests from the monastery at Adi-Aboona paying me a visit, however they sent me down by a servant a fat sheep, some white tef bread, and a horn of excellent tedj. (Trust the priests for always having the best.) An old friend of mine, Basha Rama of Adowa, had heard of my being on the road, and he sent me out some fresh fish, like a chub, but not so bony, and some vegetables, with a hearty welcome back to Abyssinia.

Our camping place was on a big grass lawn with a stream running on one side of it, and several excellent springs of water; the turf was fresh and green, and was dotted all over with wild flowers, showing that spring had really commenced, and that we had done with the red and brown colour of the Hamasen landscape, and were hereafter to see nothing but spring and summer colours till the next dry season set in. Around my tent, and inside of it even, a purple and orange crocus had opened their blooms amongst the grass; grape hyacinths abounded; freezias, both white and yellow; celandines; daisies, large and small; a daisy-leaved plant with a wee light purple and white snap-dragon shaped blossom, groups of which were very effective and would make a great addition to any English grass bank on which spring flowers are grown. Large bunches of white trumpet-shaped lilies, and others with not quite such a long flower, having a mauve stripe down each petal, were most numerous, and that lovely little plant with the ugly botanical name of "cyanotis hirsuta," was just putting forth its first blooms. I am most pleased to say that I have got several of these plants home

alive after many failures, and this summer they flowered fairly well at the Royal Gardens at Kew, and it is to be hoped that next spring they will do better, and that the flower-loving public will be able to see them in all their beauty. A large bulb will put forth as many as a hundred blossoms every day; the three lower petals are a light pinkish-mauve colour, and from the centre spring five or six feathery light blue shafts with bright golden tips. They open at daylight in the morning and last till about three o'clock in the afternoon when they close and wither, another flower on the truss taking its place next day. There were many other flowering plants that I do not know the names of, and along the sides of the springs the forget-me-nots and other water-loving plants were common, and the pools were nearly choked with water-cress which was imported into Abyssinia by the father of Mr Schimper, my travelling companion.

What with the flowers and fresh green grass and the tender green leaves which clothed all the trees, the landscape looked lovely, and the grey, brown and red hills, with their patches of cultivation formed a good background. There was, however, one serious drawback to its enjoyment, as when the wind blew from the south-east it wafted a slight smell of decaying humanity from the battlefield round Adowa, part of which fighting-ground was not more than a mile and a half distant from where we encamped. Another thunder storm at daylight that morning delayed our departure, and before we got away several priests from Adi-Aboona came to call; two of them I recognised at once, the eldest being only in a minor position when Admiral Hewett's mission was at Adowa.

We had a long chat together, and they apologised for the smallness of their yesterday's present, pleading the hardness of the times; tears came into the eyes of the eldest as he recounted all the troubles that they had suffered and the misery which the country had undergone—pestilence, war and famine had nearly ruined priest as well as peasant. I said all the pretty things I possibly could to them, hoped that now peace had been made that their position would soon improve, asked for the usual protection and good-will of the clergy wherever I might go in Abyssinia, and gave them a big backsheesh in money and some new cloth, and then asked to be excused going to see them at Adi-Aboona, as I wanted to get on to Axum to see Ras Aloula as quickly as possible.

I was blessed, had my hand kissed, and all sorts of nice compliments paid me, and was assured that all the clergy would be only too glad to do everything they possibly could for me. I mention this for the benefit of future travellers, who should always do everything they possibly can to make friends with the priests ; they are a bit of a bore, no doubt, but they may prove very useful in the time of need, and if you are once known to them there is always a refuge with them, and they can get news through the country for one when other means fail. A good name at the church at Adi-Aboona is always a good thing to have, and I am pleased to say I have one, and I daresay a time may come when it may prove useful.

A lovely march to Axum, all nature blithe and gay and at its best; birds singing and busy building their nests, butterflies in myriads, and of all colours, toying over the flowers, bees hard at work, mimosa trees one mass of bright golden balls, or laden with nearly white bottle-brushed flowers, and the lovely mimosa with a primrose bloom which ends with a rose-coloured tassel, the most beautiful of all. It was a day that made life a perfect pleasure, and I felt like a two-year-old, and enjoyed the scenery and the happy reminiscences of days passed in this charming country. We took the road that lay between Fremona and Debra Sina ; the former used to be the headquarters of the Jesuits in the sixteenth century, till at last, what with their cruelties and debaucheries they were turned out of the country leaving the worst traditions behind them, and the only monument to them is a heap of ruins on a hill to the east of the road. Debra Sina, to the west of the road, is a good-sized mountain, which rises out of a fairly flat plain, which is again surrounded by low hills. It used to be an important place before Fremona was built, as the headquarters of the clergy in this immediate district. When Fremona fell the clergy made Adi-Aboona their chief place, and it has been a very important settlement for over two hundred years.

Debra Sina is still inhabited by a few people, mostly farmers, who hold land belonging to the church, and from the further side of Axum on the west, to well the other side of the ruins of Yeha on the east, a distance of over fifty miles or thereabouts, and from Dara Tchlai in the north to some ten miles south of Adowa, a distance of over thirty miles, the property belongs mostly to the church. It is very fertile land, and capable of great development, and by helping the Abyssinian clergy to regain their influence and

making friends of them, would be a very good policy if Italy would only pursue it, as it would make them very popular throughout the length and breadth of Abyssinia.

The priests of Abyssinia are a very curious set, and everyone that has written about them have, what I consider, taken a wrong line. I do not say that what I write about them is altogether right, but I believe I understand them as well as most people. Their great dislike to foreigners has been caused by the missionaries, who have always tried to undermine the power of the native clergy and hold them up to ridicule, and until they get to know a European and see that he does not wish to interfere in their religion, they invariably do everything they can to prevent him from seeing too much of the country, and learning too much of the Abyssinian Church and its ways; for this they cannot be blamed.

The tendency of the Greek and the Roman Catholic Church in the east is to keep the peasantry and lower classes in the greatest state of ignorance, and to carry on their services in a foreign tongue. The Abyssinian clergy do exactly the same, and use the ancient Geez language instead of the modern Amharic in the churches, and their power over the people is kept up by the threat of excommunication, and by other clerical anathemas, which have a terrible portent for uneducated people, but have little or no effect on enlightened and travelled individuals. Another reason why the Abyssinian clergy dislike foreign missionaries, is that every convert they make, which luckily are very few, takes a certain amount of money and offerings away from the recognised church of the country. As far as I am concerned, I have always recognised the Abyssinian clergy as being Christians, and believing in the one God, and that has been quite good enough for me, and I really believe the sole reason why they have not reformed and kept more with the times is not so much that they have been kept shut up from modern civilisation by the Mahomedans, but that so many different forms of religions have been offered them by so many different nationalities, who all quarrel amongst themselves, and all declare that the only sure way of being saved is by adopting the method of which they are the exponents.

As long as I have been in the country I have always treated the Abyssinian priests with the courtesy that is due to them, and have, I think, never given them cause to regret

entering into religious discussions with me, and have left them with the impression that their way of getting to heaven is as good as any one else's, and that nothing God dislikes more than people, as long as they believe in him, interfering with the belief of others; and that as long as a state has a religion which does not shield crimes against humanity, it is the duty of the people to support that faith, and if they do not believe in it, they are at liberty to follow another, but not to abuse the one that they have left. The Abyssinian does not push his religion like the European, and the wholesale conversions of pagans and so-called Mahomedan Gallas have been done by the rulers for political purposes and not by the church.

The political reason for converting Mahomedans into Christians died out as soon as Egypt ceased to be a ruling power and as neighbour to Abyssinia, as it was the wild and warlike Mahomedan tribes of the frontier that were egged on by the Egyptian officials to raid into the highlands to procure Abyssinians as slaves, out of whom they also made a good deal of money for their private use.

The regeneration of the Abyssinians has now commenced by being surrounded by Christian powers; and if secular schools are started by the Italians and the English, there is no doubt that they will be well patronised by the better classes, and that education, if confined to reading, writing, and arithmetic, with a technical teaching as well, will greatly raise the population in the scale of civilisation, and will detach many of the students from the churches, the only places in Abyssinia where they can now procure an education. The priests should be encouraged to pay visits to Jerusalem; their great ambition is to perform the pilgrimage to the Holy City, and the voyage there and back has always a most beneficial effect, as it broadens their ideas and makes them less intolerant than they were before. I have met many of them that have been to Jerusalem on more than one occasion and they have been fairly well informed men, and their churches have always been better, and their congregations less fanatical, than those looked after by priests who have never been out of the country.

The Italian officials are now happily much less priest-ridden than formerly, and they also compare most favourably with the French, who seem to protect their Roman Catholic Church and use it as a means for interfering in the country. An Abyssinian to improve his position will nominally get

converted to the Roman Catholic faith by a French priest; this is the stepping-stone to French protection, and everyone who has travelled in the East knows what that means. I am convinced that the Italians are now on the right way to improve their position in the country as they have given up the military policy and are now doing everything they possibly can to attract Abyssinian settlers to their colony, who find they are much better off under Italian rule than they are in their own country. They leave the Abyssinian priests alone, and allow them to carry on their worship without let or hindrance, and had they pursued this policy when they first entered Tigré and made use of the Itchage, or chief priest of Abyssinia, who ranks next after the Abouna or archbishop, they would have had the whole of the north in their favour, and perhaps the majority of the clergy throughout Abyssinia as well.

My experience of the Abyssinian clergy has been that they want to be left alone and to pray in peace, and be allowed to cultivate their church lands from which they draw the majority of their revenues, and any nation who helps to this end will always be received favourably. Thanks to the policy pursued during the English expedition to Magdala, we left a splendid name behind with the clerical party, who were not only thankful to us for ridding the country of a tyrant, but also for our kindness, generosity and universal courtesy to them; and the dollars distributed by Admiral Hewett during his mission to the church at Adowa and Adi-Aboona confirmed them in the idea that we wished their party no harm, but that we were a tolerant and God-fearing nation. Priests of the Abyssinian faith who visit Aden see our just and firm government under which they are not molested and enjoy perfect liberty, and it only makes them wish that they lived under the same circumstances. With the more civilised and enlightened population that now exists compared to five and twenty years ago, when I first became acquainted with the Abyssinians, the priests' position is not what it was, and the majority of them know that they have to relax many of the bonds by which they bound down their flock and they have acted accordingly; and, I think, they also see that it is quite impossible for them to keep the members of their congregations in the ignorant state that they were before. They also know that the days are gone by when everyone came to them for some charm or a little holy water to cure a complaint; the very practical, nineteenth

century doctor is to be found, and not only the congregation has deserted to the modern school of medicine, but the priest himself will trust in the new treatment in preference to running the risk in getting cured by faith or unfiltered holy water.

I believe the majority of the Abyssinians care a great deal for their religion, and it is only the more worthless ones that are found round the different mission stations; people who are willing to change their faith the same as they would their clothes, and when they have worn out all that are to be got, revert to their original one again, without perhaps being any the better or any the worse for the experience, but only to be marked by others as being utterly worthless and unreliable characters. I will never have a male servant in my employ that has been near a mission if I can help it. Female servants are different; they usually are taught to sew, wash and cook, and are generally cleanly in their habits, but the majority of them run away from these establishments when they get a certain age, as they cannot stand the discipline and restraint; and I don't blame them, as a more unlovely and monotonous life does not exist.

With this digression we will continue our journey and arrive at Axum, the sacred city of Abyssinia. Schimper met me just outside the valley that leads into the town, having made but a hasty visit to the town. The first thing he said in his peculiar methodical voice was: "I cannot get into my house, many are sitting in my garden and one Italian man at the door." I asked him to explain what he meant and it turned out that these people were all dead, having most likely been wounded and died from their wounds or from starvation, and there they had remained with no one to bury them, and as the outer door of the enclosure was shut, the hyenas and animals had not been able to get in and eat them. The body at the front door of the house was evidently, he thought, of an Italian officer who had most likely known his house and sought refuge there. He reported that it was nearly impossible for a European to live in the place, owing to the disgusting sanitary state of the town, but some of the inhabitants were returning now the rains had set in, and the smell was not nearly so bad as it had been.

The direct road into Axum from Gusherworka runs between two hills; the one on the left hand is crowned on its highest point by the church of Abouna Pantaleon, one of the famous old church dignitaries, and the right hand hill is

called Hassena and belongs to Ras Aloula, where he has a large farm and several villages for his soldiers, who are nearly all of the yeoman class. The mountain on which the church of Abouna Pantaleon is situated throws out a spur which half blocks the main valley; this spur gradually declines in height and the cliffs formed are nearly perpendicular, and the different steps are covered with vegetation, long lines of white lilies being most conspicuous. The last step slopes gradually to the valley and is covered with ancient ruins of tombs, most of them covered with thick brush, but one or two of the tombs are in a good state of preservation.

This place wants completely clearing of brushwood, and then the heaped up earth removed, before any good description of it could be given, and the only thing visible is a mass of large dressed stones of rectangular shape, nearly covered with vegetation. Immediately above and about twenty-five feet higher than the road is one ruin in very good state of preservation, surrounded also by many dressed stones of large size strewn about in confusion, and they perhaps formed part of the building now left standing. I could find no inscription on them. This building is the shape of a porch and has a flight of steps leading down into a room. On each side there are two receptacles made out of blocks of stone which were evidently used as a place of sepulture; from the room leads a passage blocked by rubbish and ending with a door carved out of an enormous stone, which seems to be intact and never to have been touched since it was originally put into position.

I do not think that anyone has given a true explanation of what the ruins of Axum really are, or can put a true date to when the country was at its chief era of prosperity. Local traditions go for nothing and are absolutely without value, and in this case the people say that it is the outlet of the passage that leads to Jerusalem, along which the Queen of Sheba travelled on her way to see King Solomon at that city, and that the son that resulted from her visit, who was called Menelek I., also made use of this passage, and along it he brought the Ark of the Covenant containing the table of laws given by God Almighty to Moses on Mount Sinai, and that when the Ark passed out of this passage, the end door closed to and has not been opened since. It will be opened some day when a white man will come through it, who will be a most powerful king and will rule justly, and everyone

will be happy and contented. A pretty fairy tale legend and on a par with many of their others, but not a good beginning and introduction to base history on and to write a description of Axum for modern readers.

On turning the corner on which these ruins of the old Axumite burial ground are placed a splendid view of the present town is obtained, which is built mostly on the right hand or western side of the valley. Along the foot of the eastern ridge there are very few buildings except at the immediate vicinity of the grove of trees that occupy the middle distance and shelter the sacred church and its surrounding houses and the many ruins of an ancient civilisation. There is a stream that runs down the valley and meanders along its lower part and runs between the sacred grove and the eastern small group of buildings, and then continues its course through the open market green until it loses itself in the open ground or plain that stretches to the south and south-east of the town. Immediately under the eastern ridge a large and ancient tank occupies part of the valley, and can be filled if necessary by running the water from the stream that runs through the valley by a channel that taps it about two miles further up; the height of the top of the tank above the lowest part of the stream is at least fifty feet.

The quarry from which the large masses of granite were taken to make the many monoliths is also near the tank, and on the same side but opposite to where they were erected. Dealing with such enormous weights and putting them into their places required quite as much engineering skill as that shown by the ancient Egyptians or the inhabitants of Babylon, and most likely the date when this now forgotten art existed was contemporary in both countries. On the west side of the valley the ground slopes gradually in terraces; the lowest one, nearest the stream, is dotted over with monoliths of many patterns placed with absolutely no regularity, and they extend from near the tank to the commencement of the sacred grove from which they are divided by the main road, which runs on through the lower town and leads out to the open country beyond.

The modern houses of Axum nestle under the high western ridge of the valley and also cover a very large area beyond the church. The town is made up of a vast number of walled enclosures and many of the houses are well built,

and the number of trees within the town gives it a more rural aspect than any other African town I have ever visited.

We stopped at one of the gates leading into the sacred grove and dismounted from our mules, and I was taken to the house that belongs to Ras Aloula, situated within the enclosure. This sacred enclosure is of great size and is fully a mile round and an irregular oblong in shape. No doubt it was originally much smaller, but by degrees it has been added to and the area of the sanctuary increased. People seeking refuge within this place are safe from their pursuers, and not even the king has the power to take them out. It is also the storehouse for all the valuables of the countryside during the time of war, and may be called the National Safe Deposit of Axum.

I found that the Ras was with his chief men and officers, and his soldiers were lounging about the lanes by which the house was surrounded. I was immediately recognised by those in the courtyard, and had to shake hands with a great number before I was ushered into the big reception room. The Ras was sitting on his usual throne, a cushioned native angareb, covered with black satin, ornamented with silver-work and trimmed with little tongueless silver bells; he rose when I entered, and seized my hand in a most friendly manner and bade me welcome, and had a chair placed for me touching his seat. Several of his officers, old acquaintances of mine, also greeted me, and the Ras commenced with a string of questions of what I had been doing with myself and how all his old friends were. He told me that he knew all about Colonel Slade's and my movements soon after we arrived in the country, confirming what I have always said of the wonderful Intelligence Department that the Abyssinians possess, and that they always know what their enemy is doing and all about him, while it is very hard to get proper information regarding their movements. The conversation was the usual one on the topics of the day, and after drinking some of the excellent tedj that the Ras always provides, he sent me off to his own house, and said business would keep till to-morrow. Schimper was astonished at my reception and that the Ras had been so friendly; and I told him that he had always been the same with me, that I perfectly understood the blunt, honest soldier's character and his yeoman bringing-up, and that the courtier was only one part of his character. Schimper's face was beaming with delight, and he said: "Oh, this is a very good thing for me,

as you will be my neighbour; it is a great honour for a stranger to be given the best house that the Ras possesses. Now I am not frightened for myself, my wife and my children ; I have always lived in dread that I should be put in the prison, because I worked with the Italians." The description of Ras Aloula's house I have given in another part of the book, and I have to thank him for his kindness to me during a sojourn of nearly three and a half months in Tigré, and especially during the time that I was so ill with enteric fever, brought on from the horribly insanitary state of Adowa ; not a day used to pass during my long illness that he did not send to inquire how I was and if he could be of any use to me, and as long as he was anywhere near I was sent fresh milk daily from his house. I had every little attention paid me by him, and when the Council met at Macalle to determine whether I should be immediately sent to the south to King Menelek or allowed to take my own time and wait for my supplies from Asmara, so that I could travel in comfort, his was the only voice raised to give me time and let me do what I liked.

During our many long interviews I perhaps had a better chance of learning what had taken place in the country and what the politics of the north were than any of the Italians; and Ras Aloula might have been a very useful friend to Italy could they have forgiven him for the Dogali affair, as he had a great respect for the Italian officers and for their courage and utter fearlessness of death. He always spoke in the harshest terms of General Baratieri, and he seemed to have the greatest dislike for him and for all his actions, and it was his distrust of him that made the Ras keep his own spies in the General's camp while negotiations were being carried on, who gave him the news that the Italians were advancing to surprise King Menelek at Adowa. Ras Aloula's death was a great loss to Abyssinia, and, no doubt, had his wounds been properly attended to he would have survived. He and Ras Hagos of the Tembien had a dispute about some landed property, and they and their followers fought; Ras Hagos was killed, and Ras Aloula was wounded and succumbed from his wounds some few days after. He was not liked by many of the Italians, but all those that had personal dealings with him spoke most highly of him. Sir Gerald Portal quarrelled with him when he visited Abyssinia, and said things about him which were hardly justified. There are always two sides to a question, and only one has been published, and some people are apt to give judgment first

and hear the evidence afterwards. As both Ras Aloula and Sir Gerald Portal are both dead, the matter may safely be allowed to drop.

Ras Aloula was most useful to the English Mission in 1884, and he performed everything he was asked to do in a most satisfactory manner; and the many years I knew him I always found him a brave, straightforward, truthful native gentleman, and I am sure many Europeans who have been in the country and have had dealings with him cannot lay claim to a tithe of these virtues. He was over the medium height, very broad and deep-chested, active, a splendid rider and runner, a good shot and enormously strong. He was very good-looking, good eyes, well-shaped nose, and very white and perfect teeth, and had short, black, wavy hair, and was more like a brown Englishman than anything else; he had nearly always a pleasant smile, and he enjoyed a joke and was a charming companion and story-teller, and a mine of information about his own country. I never met an Abyssinian official who was less fanatical, and many of his friends and agents were Mahomedans, not Dervishes; and this was one of the reasons that the late King Johannes towards the close of his reign did not trust him so much as formerly, as he would not use the harsh measures towards the Moslems that the king had ordered to be carried out.

The hours at Axum flew by most quickly, and from daylight till late at night I was busily employed inspecting the ruins and paying and receiving visits. I shall not try and describe the ruins fully, as the greater portion of them are dealt with by the late Mr Theodore Bent in his very interesting and very accurate book called "The Sacred City of the Ethiopians," published by Messrs Longmans, Green & Co. in 1893. Mrs Bent accompanied her husband, and their crossing the frontier of Erithrea to Abyssinia was a very plucky and daring feat, considering the disturbed state the country was then in. It is a great pity that they were only ten days at Axum, as the town and its surroundings cannot be properly explored in so short a time. I have been there several times, and must have passed at least six weeks in all, and every day I came across something fresh and interesting, and I am quite certain I did not examine nearly all that there was to be seen above ground.

The secrets of the place are all hidden; the bush requires first to be removed, and then the screw-jack and spade must be used to remove the big stones and rubbish that have

accumulated for centuries, and then excavations would have to be undertaken before the ancient buildings are laid bare and some ground plan drawn up of this marvellous old town. After every heavy downpour of rain, old coins are washed out of the soil, and after one exceedingly heavy storm I was lucky enough to get two copper coins and a little bronze figure. The small Abyssinian boys are delighted to accompany a stranger about the place, and I always had several to accompany me in my walks; they are intelligent, sharp-eyed little urchins, and take a great interest in the search for curiosities, and unless someone is there to reward them for finding the old coins they do not trouble to pick them up, as they are of no value to them.

I always think it a great pity for one traveller to crib the ideas and work of another, and I shall therefore refer my readers to the late Mr Bent's book for particulars of what both he and I saw, and only add details which he has failed to describe. Unfortunately the measurements of many of the monuments and stones that were taken by me were left with my luggage at Adowa when I went south, and I have up till this day never been able to recover it, and the only measurement that I have with me is of the large fallen monolith; this huge stone, broken into several fragments, is, roughly speaking, about one-third larger than Cleopatra's Needle on the Thames Embankment, and the engineering difficulty of removing it from one side of the valley to the other must have been enormous. Its workmanship is of a very high class order, and it seems just as clear cut as it was countless centuries ago. Tradition says that this one was destroyed by Gudert, Queen of Amhara, when she visited Axum, but what date no one knows. It was, however, soon after Abyssinia was converted to Christianity, and her reason for doing so was that it was a monument belonging to the pagans, where they sacrificed to their god who was not the true one. The people go so far as to say that the way it was thrown down was by a trench being dug from the river to alongside its foundation, and the water undermined it and it fell. All these local traditions may be founded on a small grain of fact, but they are very unsatisfactory evidence to try and build history on. What may be taken for certain is that Axum has been destroyed and sacked on many occasions, and most likely the last time was perhaps, but I do not say for certain, by Mahomed Grayn, or one of his followers, but

it does not seem that he interfered with the standing monuments or more damage to them would have been done.

The old town of Axum must have mostly been built on the western ridge and not in the valley, as the traces of ruins and well-dressed stones are more numerous here than anywhere else. High above, on this western ridge, are the ruins of another large temple or church, of which little or nothing is known, except by tradition, which says that it was the large temple belonging to the very old people. Its four sides point due north, east, south and west; quite close to this is the ruin of another small temple, similar to that at Koheita, which is, I believe, of the same epoch as that of Adulis or Zullah, where the English expedition landed. We can now trace, without the least doubt, the road from the sea coast to Axum, which was made use of by the ancient Egyptians, Sabœans, Greek allies, or whoever the civilised people may have been that first inhabited this country. It started from Adulis, then went to the Koheita plateau, where there are more ruins than what Mr Bent visited (near to the Adulis end of the plateau). Then leaving the plateau, the road must have followed above the present Cascasse pass to Amba Arab Terica (this name may be derived from the "fortress of the road of the Arab"). It then descended into the Senafe valley, where, besides other ruins, there is a monolith standing with a sun and new moon engraven on its top face, the same as found on some of those at Axum; there is also a sacrificial stone exactly similar to those round the monoliths, and in the sacred grove at the same town. From Senafe valley, or more properly speaking Efessi, to Yeha, near Adi Aboona and Adowa, is about thirty miles as the crow flies, and from the hill above this monolith at Efessi, the mountain above Yeha is plainly visible.

To get over thirty miles of the map in Abyssinia is a terrible day's march, so doubtless there are old ruins between these two places. I have never crossed this bit of country, and the natives cannot be relied on, as anything to them is old as long as it is broken or in bad repair and one often has a trip for nothing, and when some great find is expected, it turns out to be some wretched modern house that has tumbled down, perhaps during the last rainy season. The sacrificial stone at Efessi tradition attributes to having been brought by Ali, the nephew of Mahomed, from Axum when the prophet recalled his family to return to Mecca, they having taken refuge there when Mahomed fled from Mecca to Medina.

This is a very useful bit of history, as it makes an undoubted landmark amongst the sea of unknown epochs, and fixes Axum as a recognised sanctuary of the Christians over 1300 years ago. Mahomed also curses any of his followers that make war against the Abyssinians of Axum, because they treated his family so kindly, and this may be the reason why Mahomed Grayn treated it so leniently compared to other towns; therefore in this instance tradition may be correct, as there can be no doubt that Mahomed's family visited Axum.

I should like if possible to trace this road further, and connect it up with the island of Meroe, or that country bordered by the Tacazze or Atbara, the Rahad and Blue Nile, and Nile proper, which is now a desert, but in ancient times was thickly populated, and the seat of a very old civilisation bringing us perhaps to the most ancient Egyptian times. There are plenty of proofs that not only ancient Egypt but ancient Babylon traded with or fought against this country, as the pictures on the ruins in the two countries show. The myrrh tree is figured on both, and so is the cheetah or hunting leopard, one of the nicest pets that can be kept in the East, and often showing dog-like fidelity. The myrrh comes from Somaliland, and it is reported in the Danakil country, and was no doubt brought by the inhabitants of these countries to either Koheita or Yeha, and it was shipped from Adulis north and north-east, and carried perhaps through Axum down that ancient trading road that must have existed to Meroe.

The ancients that visited Axum for trade must also have been aware of the road from Axum across the Tacazze to the north of the Semien province, and the lost Adulitan inscription describes the snow mountains of that country. Travellers should always be most careful in what they say regarding the little known countries that they visit; here in Abyssinia people are more likely to err perhaps than in any other country, and say things do not exist because they have not seen them. Bruce questions Lobo's statements regarding snow in Abyssinia on the Semien mountains, because he did not see it. Mr Bent confirms what Father Lobo says, that snow exists. Both Bruce and Lobo are more or less right, as the highest Semien peaks are snow clad during part of the year, but sometimes there is not a trace of it to be seen. I have seen these mountains during nearly every month of the year, and during the cold season there may be snow on them for many days running, and it is quite easy to see that the snow lies much lower some days than it does on others; at other

times no snow is visible, but that is no proof that it is not to be found in sheltered gullies and depressions that cannot be seen from the point of observation. The natives say that it is to be found, and I really do not see any reason to doubt them, as there is no occasion for them to tell a lie on a little question like this. I have always been desperately unlucky in my travels in Abyssinia, as I never see marvellous things like some others, and I can only attribute it to a want of imagination and not from any lack of observation, as I am most careful to make mental or other notes on everything interesting that I come across.

I really believe that Bruce thought he was telling the truth when he wrote about cutting beef-steaks off live animals, and that the people ate them raw. I have seen exactly the same thing as he saw, but I should not describe it in the same manner, and it only shows how observant people should be of every little detail. I was at Axum at the time, so the incident is quite in place, and I hope I shall not be spoiling a good traveller's yarn when I explode this old fiction. What I complain of in Bruce is that he leads one on to believe that the animal walks on till it is all eaten, but this he does not confirm. Both pack bullocks, horses, or mules suffer terribly from sore backs, and very often a sack of matter more like a long tumour forms under the hide, and between it and the flesh, and often enough compromises the flesh of the back as well. This tumour or sack must be entirely removed before the back will heal up properly, so a long incision is made alongside it parallel to the back bone, and the hide cut into a flap and lifted up, and the red tumour is removed; the hide is then put back in its place again and the wound bandaged. This common operation I have seen performed many times, and I have also seen the operator and his assistants eating raw meat at the time, but not the filth and matter taken away from the animal. No native that I have ever met has heard of such a thing as Bruce describes, and they have been very indignant at the idea of being accused of eating meat that has not been killed in the orthodox manner, that is, with a short prayer repeated when the animal's throat is cut. The only difference between the slaughtering of animals by Christian and Moslem in this country, is the former turns the animal's head towards Jerusalem, and says, in the name of the Virgin Mary, and the other turns the animal's head towards Mecca, and says, "Bismillah," or in the name of the Lord.

Travellers that follow me may say that snow never exists on the high lands of Lasta, but I have seen it there, also on the mountains above the Werri river on the road from Adowa to Abbi-Addi; it certainly never lay for any length of time, but it might fall under some circumstances and remain for a day or two, especially if the weather was cloudy and there was no sunshine; certainly the highest peaks of the Semien can now be included amongst the few snow peaks of Africa, but not those where it remains permanently.

Mr Bent in his book on page 186 gives an illustration of an altar-stone at the foot of one of the monoliths with bunches of grapes and vine leaves with a scroll running between them; on another of these altars, not described by him, is a similar ornament, but the leaves are those of the fig, and the fruit represented is no doubt the Abyssinian trungie or shaddock. I remarked to Schimper at the time how curious it was that both trees were growing within a few feet of this altar and the likeness to them depicted on the stone was most exact to nature. The Abyssinian trungie is still carried by the priests and some of the people of higher rank, and is often smelt by them for its nice perfume; it is a peculiar shaped fruit not unlike what is seen in the East and West Indies, and if Layard's "Nineveh" is turned to, vol. 1, chap. xv., page 125, there is a picture of a winged figure holding in its right hand what is supposed to be a fir cone, but is a great deal more like the Abyssinian trungie. I am not aware that the fir cone had any particular use amongst the Assyrians, who are supposed to have been Sabœans, and the trungie is still in use in Abyssinia.

Again if pages 353 and 358, chap. xiv., vol. 2, of the same book is referred to, the trappings of the headstalls for the horses are identically of the same ornamented pattern as are made to this day in the country, and I daresay if further researches were made, many other similar ornaments might be found to resemble each other. The slinger depicted on page 344 has exactly the same kind of sling as used in Abyssinia to the present day, which differs considerably from the ordinary sling, and wears his sword on the left side the same as the archer, as if worn on the right side it would get in the way when the weapon was being used, or the bow being drawn. Other pictures give the swordsmen wearing their weapon on the right side, the same as the Abyssinian does at present, and he is the only native that I know that draws his sword with the right hand from the same side that

it is on. Can what I have just mentioned be any further evidence to prove that these northern Abyssinians have a Sabœan and Arabian origin, or is it only a curious coincidence and a matter of chance that the same things are found in both countries?

The only people who were capable of moving such masses of stones as are found worked at Axum were the inhabitants of Babylon to the north-east, and the ancient Egyptians on the north-north-west. Axum seems to be the point furthest south in Africa where these huge rocks have been quarried. I believe the spade and pick are the only means of getting at further details, and that a very rich harvest is to be gathered in the vicinity of Axum and along the old route from Adulis, and that further discoveries are possible on the section between Axum and some unknown point in the island of Meroe which will throw more light on this nearly unknown country. I am not so sure that the monoliths exceed in weight those of any Egyptian monuments, and they have been transported to their places over a more difficult country, and water power could not have been used to float them to near the places where they are erected as in Egypt and the vicinity of Nineveh. When excavations are undertaken inscriptions may be found that will tell us more about the Axumite dynasty which we know little or nothing about, and it will find its exact page in history, and no doubt the Ptolemy era will be found to be comparatively modern compared to the ancient kingdom of northern Abyssinia.

There are monoliths at Axum in all stages of workmanship, from the beautifully finished ones to those in the rough, and the way these immense stones were taken out of the quarry can be seen distinctly; a shallow trench was cut to contain water, and from its lower part holes were bored in the rock which were plugged with wood, and the water swelled the wood and broke the mass of rock away. Some barbaric invasion must have taken place when Axum was in the height of its prosperity, and a great and rapid change must have occurred, such as the Mahdi's invasion would have been on Egypt had not the English been there to prevent it. I could write a great deal more about the ancient monuments of Axum that have hitherto only been partially described, but it would be of little value, and would only go to prove what little is known of this old seat of civilisation, so I shall only add a little about its modern history which most people care more about than the dead and forgotten population that once inhabited this interesting kingdom.

I mention in another part of this book that the present ruler of the country, for reasons best known to himself, has never visited the town. If he did it was in secret and it was not known to many people; I could find no account of his visit; whether I have been wilfully misinformed I cannot say. On looking at Whitaker's Almanac for 1897 I see the date given of his coronation as February 6th, 1896, and I remember soon after the civilised world was astounded at the defeat of the Italians at Adowa; the French press was full of marvellous accounts of the king's coronation at Axum, which were evidently taken from the accounts of coronations of ancient kings written by the old Jesuit or other historians. The only European at Adowa during King Menelek's campaign against the Italians was Monsieur Carrere, a French officer, who was instructor of artillery, and I could not find out that he visited Axum. He died on his way down to Fashoda from Abyssinia to join Marchand, immediately after King Menelek returned to Adese-Ababa, and it was, I think, impossible for his letters describing an incident which he did not see to go through Abyssinia and out by Djibuti and arrive in France to be published at the time when these descriptions appeared in print. I think it was impossible for him to have sent them, and there was no other European that could have done so, so they must have had their origin in the brain of some writer in France and have been written for some express purpose. I could find no one in Axum or in the country to give me any fuller details of an Abyssinian coronation than what have already been published, and giving accounts of ceremonies that one has never witnessed must always be unsatisfactory and I shall not attempt it.

King Johannes was the last king that was crowned at Axum in either 1871 or 1872. On the direct road from Adowa to Axum, about a mile and a half from the town but out of sight of it, is an enormous sycamore fig-tree which no doubt is many centuries old; under this tree all kings who go to be crowned at the sacred church have to change their clothes and put on new garments, and from this tree the procession is formed that conducts the king to the church where the ceremony is performed. From near this tree to the sacred grove on the right side of the road is nearly one uninterrupted line of ancient monuments, among them being the one with the famous Greek inscription which Mr Bent, like many other travellers, made a copy of.

The king's palace is situated on the crest of the western

ridge above the town, and is in a bad state of repair; it consists of several round houses, similar to the ordinary Abyssinian domiciles, and enclosed by a dilapidated stone wall. None of the modern kings have ever remained long at Axum, and the reason is not far to seek, as people who have rebelled against the rulers of the country, or have had disputes with them, have always sought sanctuary at the church at Axum and the king is powerless to touch them, and of course it is an awkward position to be in, to pray under the same roof with a person you want to imprison, or very likely to execute, or get rid of in some way or another.

This is the only place in the kingdom where the church is more powerful than the ruler, and it is a great boon to the population to be able to have some place to go to where it is possible to escape from an unjust kingly decision, or to escape from the jealousy or spite of a bad ruler. One sees all sorts and conditions of men within the sanctuary, from the innocent to those who have perpetrated the greatest crimes. To engage in a wordy war within the sacred grove is allowable, but fighting with weapons or shedding blood is not permissible, and no one as long as he is a Christian can be arrested or touched as long as they remain within these precincts. It contains many small houses to shelter the fugitives where food can be bought, but no hydromel or native beer or intoxicants, and storehouses where valuables can be kept, and the size of the enclosure gives ample opportunity for exercise, so the people who seek refuge can spend the day in eating, praying and sleeping until they are pardoned, or can arrange to get across the frontier, away from the clutches of their enemy.

The chief man in the country after the King of Kings, is the Abouna or archbishop, the head of the church; without the Abouna no king can be crowned, and it is he that at his own or the king's wish can excommunicate any of his subjects, or the king himself if necessary, and then the king can only rule by the strength of his followers who adhere to him. There are at present two Abounas with King Menelek, and they are played off one against the other. These archbishops come from the Coptic Monastery at Alexandria or Cairo, and when they once reach Abyssinia, they never leave it on any consideration. They are not natives of the country, so the life-long exile must be very trying, as they have been accustomed to more freedom than what they can enjoy when they once reach Abyssinia. Formerly their headquarters

used to be at Addi-Abouna near Adowa, but now they are kept near the king in Shoa.

After the Abouna, ranks the Itchage, or chief priest; his residence is at Axum, within the sacred enclosure, and formerly on state occasions he was always with the king; he is always an Abyssinian, but his post is not a hereditary one. Soon after my departure from Axum the Itchage died, and I do not know who has been chosen in his place. The late Itchage Theophilus was a charming man, and I saw a good deal of him at Adowa during Admiral Hewett's mission, and he was the first person, after visiting Ras Aloula, that I called on. I found him suffering from a very bad cold which turned to pneumonia, and which carried him off at last very suddenly. This disease is very common in Abyssinia, and nearly always fatal; consumption is also a prevalent complaint, and many other diseases of the respiratory organs caused by the sudden changes of temperature. The Itchage had a most charming little house, evidently built from Portuguese designs, as it was the only one of its sort that I saw in the whole country. It opened on to a small but well-kept garden, and here the good old man used to spend the greater portion of his day in receiving visitors or reading the scriptures. For an Abyssinian he was what might be called a well-read man, and could talk very intelligently on most subjects; he was not the least bigoted, and lamented greatly the disturbed condition of his country, and the ignorant state in which it was. He told me on several occasions that he could see that unless reforms took place that Abyssinia must soon pass under some foreign power that would govern it properly, as the taxation was too heavy at present, and the exactions out of proportion to the benefits received, and it was the best thing that could happen for everyone concerned, except for the leading officials. His ideas were of course distasteful to the present ruler, who had placed one of his own clerical officials at Axum to report to him everything that passed there, and to keep a watch on his movements and to find out if he had any dealings with the Italians, as his sympathies were rather with them. He might be called by some people a traitor to his king, whom he did not recognise, but a lover of his country and fellowmen, and his great aim in life seemed to be their improvement.

I have met a good many priests in Abyssinia that are of the same way of thinking, who would hail with delight a foreign power that would govern the country properly and

not interfere with their religion ; but their great fear seems to be that if their country was conquered that some new religion antagonistic to theirs would be forced on the country, and their church lands would be alienated. It was always a great pleasure to me to hear how well the priests spoke of the English and our expedition to the country, and how grateful they were for what we did for them.

It is very difficult to understand the Abyssinian Church, and as the missionary writers differ in their opinions of it, it is a difficult job for a civilian to give a lucid account; but they all agree in one thing, that it is a very debased form of Christianity, which they all think could be improved if their own particular way of getting to heaven was adopted. The disagreements among the missionaries that have visited the country have always been a scandal, and are likely to continue so ; and the regeneration of the Abyssinian Church will commence when a higher education is given to the people, and the priests are brought more into contact with the outside world. The Abyssinian Church, there can be no doubt, is an offshoot of that of the Coptic Church of Egypt, from where it is said the first missionaries started to Axum. I do not think that there is enough evidence to show at what exact date Christianity was adopted by the Abyssinians, and there is no reason to disbelieve that they heard of Jesus Christ and the new religion during the life of our Saviour, as they had commercial dealings with Jerusalem and Egypt at that date, and some Abyssinians may have adopted this religion at that time. We have the very earliest Christian Churches all down the Nile in Egypt and Nubia, and from the last old Christian colony on the Nile to Abyssinia was no great distance ; and as in the present day news travels quicker over trade routes than by any other, there can be little doubt that they received the news of Christianity, and a purer and perhaps a more convenient form of religion than their own, within a few months of its commencement.

Late in the third century or very early in the fourth the civilised part of Abyssinia had adopted the new faith. Athanasius the Great, about the year A.D. 330, was supposed to have sent clergy to extend the church in Abyssinia, and no doubt at that time, owing to the undoubted Greek influence which must have existed for several centuries before, the inhabitants wanted educated men to propound the scriptures and doctrines to them, as perhaps they did not

agree amongst themselves. The Greek and Coptic Church are not the same, I believe, but have many points in common. Mentioning Greek influence, I must here tell a little story that took place at Adowa during Admiral Hewett's mission. The same Greek consul that thwarted the late General Gordon on his mission to King Johannes was present, and he told the king that "Greece was the biggest nation in the world, and had conquered nearly the whole of it." The king's reply was, "Yes, a long time ago." Ras Aloula used always to laugh over this tale and was never tired of telling it, and it also raised the ire of the Admiral, who was very angry about it.

The Greeks have left Abyssinia alone lately and the Russians have taken their place, and for political reasons claim that the Abyssinian Church is practically the same as theirs. They will be able to get a lot of the natives to pretend to adopt their faith as long as it pays to do so, and there are things to be given away, but it will be a serious and complicated business if the present ruler should agree that the Abyssinian Church was to be protected by Russia, as it would give them a pretext for interfering in this part of Africa, the only place where they have any chance of getting a foothold ; commercially it would be of little use to them, but politically they could make it very disagreeable if they insisted on helping their new-found co-religionists.

The Abyssinian Church is torn with schisms, just the same as all are, and they have rebellious clergy like in England who are always appealing to the Abouna or Itchage, and great arguments go on during which they get very excited and angry, but I have never heard of them coming to blows. The late King Johannes used to be greatly bothered with the church disputes, but I have not heard whether the present ruler is the same ; however much they may quarrel on minor points amongst themselves, they all rally and show a united front against anybody coming with an alien religion.

Mr Theophilus Waldmeir, who lived many years in Abyssinia as a missionary, and who talked the language well, complains bitterly against the Abyssinian priests, I suppose for the reason that two of a trade never agree, and points out one great difference between the Christians of the south of Shoa and the Christians of the north. The latter believe that Christ has two births, only one from the Father

and the other from the Virgin Mary, the former believe that he has one more, viz.: that from the Holy Spirit by baptism: on this small point constant meetings and great arguments take place. I have met many priests who believe that our Saviour was a perfect God and not a man, others who believe that he was a perfect man therefore a God, and others who do not care very much what he was, that the world was good, and man was as good or as bad as circumstances permitted, and that we were not perfect but we ought to try and be so, and also try and make life in the world as happy as possible, as we did not know for certain where we were going to in the next. The last is a most comfortable religion and the best, and many of the priests and monks live up to it and cultivate their ground, and say their prayers and bother nobody, and are ready to baptise, marry or bury anyone when required, and join in the feasts at the first two ceremonies, and the prayers and wailing at the third.

The Abyssinian religion is a pretty good jumble of everything and fairly elastic. The young Abyssinian boy is baptised at about the fortieth day, when he has a blue silk cord put round his neck and about the eighth or tenth day after his birth he is circumcised; sometimes, however, the silk cord is put on when the latter operation is performed. Many of the priests say that the circumcision rite is practised because our Saviour underwent it, not knowing that their undoubted Jewish or Semitic origin is the cause and that it was practised long before the Christian era. This is the only religious ceremony he undergoes until he gets married in church and takes the sacrament with his wife. These marriages are generally made after they have lived together for some time and they generally prove happy. The civil marriage, which the church has nothing to do with, is one of pure arrangement and consists of a present either in money or kind to the parents of the daughter.

The next religious ceremony is the burial, the body being placed in a mat or a cloth and carried on a native bedstead to the churchyard where a shallow grave is dug and the corpse is placed therein, its face pointing towards the east, and it is covered up and the place of sepulture is soon obliterated by vegetation, and in a few years entirely lost, no tombstone being placed over the last resting-place. Some of the high officials or royalty are buried between the outer and inner walls of the church itself and their

graves last longer, but they soon are lost all trace of. The Christian graves are not marked in Abyssinia, and all burial grounds that are seen belong or belonged to the Mahomedans who think a great deal more about their dead than the Abyssinians. This must have been the custom for centuries, otherwise inscriptions would still exist that would help to determine the history of the country and the different dates in which the kings and princes lived in the different provinces. I had great difficulty in finding the grave of Ras Areya Selassie, King Johannes' only legitimate son who was buried at Macalle, and at last the place was pointed out to me but there was hardly a mark left to tell the place of interment.

I told the priests there that if they ever visited England they would find that we put up monuments to our dead, and that Prince Alamayon had been greatly honoured by our queen, and that he was buried in a beautiful grave in St George's Chapel, Windsor, the church adjoining Her Majesty's palace. The priests are always interested to learn that St George is the patron Saint of England, and that there is an English order of Saint Michael and Saint George; they have many churches dedicated to them in Abyssinia. I do not understand why it is or for what other reason that the Abyssinians are the only Christians that care little or nothing about their dead, but so it is; there are evidently Sabœan tombs that still exist, and in part of the north there are burial-places of an unknown race. These people marked the last resting-places of their friends, and these people must have been the ancestors of the present race; it is evidently as I said before no modern custom, but must be centuries old, as there are no tombstones in any church that I have visited in the country.

As regards the burial itself, there is enough noise made to make a person remember the event for a long time, the women wailing on the house-tops or on the walls of the enclosures being the first intimation that someone has passed away. The neighbours all congregate and form in procession which conducts the body to the door of the church, where the short burial service is read and they then return to the house of the deceased. If the family are well-off eating and drinking takes place, and the scriptures and psalms are read to well on in the night, and if the family is a poor one they provide what they can and the richer neighbours contribute in kind towards the meal

that is partaken. Those that are well-off feed any beggars that may be in the neighbourhood and also give alms, a common eastern custom and not confined to the Christian religion only.

We hear all the abuse of the Abyssinian clergy from so-called Christian Missionaries, and I really consider that many of them are perhaps little better and just as bigoted and intolerant as the people they attempt to describe. Perhaps I have met as many Abyssinian clergy as most people, and I have certainly seen a few missionaries of nearly all nationalities, and I have on many occasions heard the Abyssinian priests' opinion on the foreign brother of the cloth. I have never heard these uneducated and half-savage people that have been cut off from civilisation and the outside world for centuries say such uncharitable things as those that have had a good education, seen the world, and who, therefore, ought to know better. I always try to describe people as I find them, and I never try to interfere with anyone's religion, and for this reason, perhaps, I have been better received and have been shown more courtesy by the clerical party of the country than what the missionary has. I have never been insulted by an Abyssinian priest, although I have had a church door shut in my face by one who has perhaps never seen a white man before; this is nothing to be astonished at, but I have made friends with that priest in a very short time, and he has apologised for what he has done, as soon as he found out I was a Christian and had not come to try and convert him. There are many of them that are ignorant and fanatical. We can find people who are the same in England, they as a rule dislike strangers because they have heard nothing good of them; they are fairly immoral, so are many of the eastern clergy; they are superstitious and have many of the greater and lesser faults of humanity which can be accounted for from want of education, and their country being surrounded so long by a bad government and a people with a religion that has always tried to put an end to their existence. They have never had a good example to copy, so they still remain in a state that can be compared to the very worst chapter of the history of the European clergy; when they did try a new faith it was that of the Jesuit and the Inquisition which they did not like, and the colours of the picture of this epoch have not faded but have been rendered more vivid by tradition. There has been no Roman Catholic in the

country, a bit better than the more enlightened and educated of the Abyssinian Church, and the Roman Catholic missions as a rule have been cloaks to hide politics behind. The late King Johannes turned all of them out of the country except one priest whom he left behind as an example of what they were and their immoral character, he having so many illegitimate children.

I have found the clergy, if left alone, peaceable, simple-minded men, very hospitable and always willing to do me a good turn, and ready to help me and pass me on to their neighbouring friends, and I expect other travellers would find them the same as long as they treated them properly. When once their confidence has been won, they can be made great use of, but if they think that the traveller has any wish to interfere with them in any way they make the worst possible enemies, and they will warn their other friends against him, and he will meet with a bad reception everywhere.

There are many poor churches and poor priests, others are very rich and possess large tracts of land; these latter priests live on the best that the country can produce and they feed a great number of the poor daily; the former must, poor people very often, beg for their living, and do things that their wealthier brethren would not think of doing, so comparing the two would be the same as a foreigner giving a description of the clergy of England based on seeing some wretched curate with a large family and a salary of sixty pounds per annum. Whatever nation has dealings with Abyssinia in the future must reckon with the clerical party. Italy did not make enough use of it; had she done so, she might have got hold of much better information and have secured a strong party following in the country in her favour; I have no hesitation in saying that there was a religious sect that also worked against her, who seem to be only too glad to forward the interests of their church in every unpatriotic way and do not care what means they use so as to gain their ends; religion is everything to them and country and state nothing.

I have no wish to try and paint the Abyssinian in too glowing characters, and I am quite ready to acknowledge that many of them are just as bad as other natives in other parts of the world, and it is no country for a bad-tempered man or one who has not been used to natives to travel in, but it offers no obstacles to an English officer or gentleman

who knows how to conduct himself. What I wish to be understood is that there are many highly intelligent people to be found, and that nearly all the Abyssinians that have travelled admit their inferiority to the European in most things. The great wonder to me is that, when their modern history is taken into consideration, they are not worse than they are. Many of the better classes are willing to learn when they have the opportunity, and the lower classes make keen traders and good workmen. They are industrious and hard-working, but, as long as honest labour and a mercantile life is looked down on by the rulers and princes and the corrupt soldiery that support them, there can be no chance of the country rising in the social scale. I have every reason to believe that this state of affairs cannot last much longer, as neither priest nor peasant are at present contented, and the moment they know that they are surrounded by neighbours who have no wish to take away their country, and would like to see them well-off and enjoying the fruits of their labour, and are ready to purchase all their surplus supplies from them, they will most likely act for themselves, and remove the cause of their present misery and wretchedness.

The soldiery were called into existence by Abyssinia being surrounded by their Mahomedan enemies, and little by little they increased and multiplied till they have got out of all proportion to the wants of a peaceful country. To keep these soldiers quiet they either have to be paid or allowed to loot. Paying all of them a wage sufficient to keep them in indolence is out of the question, as the finances of the present king are not large enough to allow him to pay the half of his army that are under arms; so looting has to be allowed or expeditions started into country that never belonged to Abyssinia. There must be a limit to this, and the day may not be far distant when the problem will have to be faced—what is to become of a lazy, loafing lot of mercenaries who have never done anything in their lives except fighting and looting, men without homes and without territory ready to fight for those who give the highest pay, and who do not value the lives of their fellow-Christians at the price of a sheep or a jar of hydromel. I am writing of the mercenary soldier whose father and grandfather, perhaps, were the same, and not of the bulk of the fighting force of the country who are yeomen farmers, and their servants, or the peasants and their families, and who, as long as an Englishman behaves himself, will find a hearty welcome from.

In the north such a thing as a standing army does not exist at present. The majority of the mercenaries after the death of King Johannes gradually went over to King Menelek, as he was the most powerful and richest man in the country, and there was more chance of seeing service with him than anyone else; and these men when they fought against the Italians at Adowa did not suffer so much as the troops belonging to the other leaders.

At Axum there are only a few soldiers kept, enough to keep order in the immediate neighbourhood; as the sacred nature of the place prevents it being looted or disturbances taking place in its immediate vicinity, so they are not required. The northern fighting men live on their own land, and are tillers of the soil; they nearly all have modern breech-loaders and plenty of cartridges, and they are mustered very speedily, should occasion offer. In the chapter on Adowa I give a description of the assembling of a force got together when Ras Aloula was helping Ras Mangesha to put down Ras Sebat's rebellion in Agamie.

I enjoyed my various visits to Axum immensely, and I regret that circumstances over which I had no control did not allow me to return to this interesting town and complete the researches I commenced. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to revisit it, and I live in hopes that I may accomplish it some day in the immediate future. Ras Aloula and the Itchage Theophilus are both dead, but I have still others that I can count as friends living in the town.

CHAPTER VIII

ADOWA AND ABBI ADDI

ADOWA for many years was by far the most important commercial town of Abyssinia, and it used to be visited by many merchants from all parts of Abyssinia, who here exchanged the natural products of the country for goods from beyond the seas. Its weekly market was then largely attended, and natives from all parts of the Soudan and Arabia were constantly seen in the town. Salt bars, the common currency of other parts of Abyssinia, were little used, and transactions used to take place in Maria Theresa dollars coined in Austria or by barter. The cattle-market before the rinderpest and horse-disease broke out was a very large one, and horses, mules, cows and oxen were brought for sale in large numbers, and used to be remarkably cheap compared to the prices paid at present. Adowa is only seventeen miles by road from Axum, and the residents of that town sold more of their produce at Adowa than in their local market.

The climate here is a very good one, as the town stands at an altitude of 6500 feet above the sea-level, and it is never too hot or too cold. It is sheltered from the south, east and north by high ranges of mountains, which break the force of the bleak winds that are so prevalent at many other Abyssinian towns of about the same altitude. The environs of Adowa are most fertile, and in the height of its commercial prosperity the whole of the valleys and the lower slopes of the mountains were one vast grain field, and not only Adowa, but the surrounding villages carried a very large, contented and prosperous population. The neighbouring mountains are still well-wooded. The numerous springs, brooks and small rivers give an ample supply of good water for domestic and irrigation purposes, and the water meadows always produce an inexhaustible supply of good grass the whole year round. No wonder, therefore, it was a favourite place and prospered, and it is to be hoped that, as there is now peace in the land,

its population will again increase, and that it will not be long before it regains its old importance.

The best view of Adowa is to be obtained from the hill on which are situated the old ruins of the Jesuit town of Fremona, which is situated to the north-west and about two and a half miles off. Two miles further off to the north is the monastic settlement of Adi Aboona, the property of the Aboona or chief of the Abyssinian Church. Although Adi Aboona is on slightly higher ground than Adowa, a good view of it is not to be got owing to an out-jutting spur from Mount Selado, which ends just *vis-à-vis* to Fremona. From the latter the whole panorama of the town is spread out before one, and to me when looking at it for the first time after an absence of twelve years I could hardly believe that the heap of ruins and the nearly deserted houses was the same place that I had spent so many pleasant days in. With the exception of the five churches of Our Saviour, the Trinity, the Virgin Mary, Saint Michael and Saint George and some few large houses, the place seemed to be a mass of ruins and broken-down enclosures.

I had come from Axum by the direct road, and on my way the villages, the nearer one got to Adowa, showed what the country had gone through, as the majority of the houses were unroofed and in a tumble-down condition. Skulls of men and bones of animals were frequent, victims of the famine and plague, and every yard from Fremona towards once happy Adowa presented some fresh horror. The remains of an English camp is never a very cheerful sight, but that of an Abyssinian camp is still less; and here were the remains of unburied humanity, dirt, filth and corruption at every step, and, although there had been heavy rains which had washed away part of the fragments, and the grass was growing luxuriantly, still a sickly smell of decaying flesh pervaded the atmosphere, and every few yards I had to put my handkerchief to my nose and go on as fast as possible. I asked Schimper if he called it healthy and a fit place to come to, and he replied, "Oh, this is nothing to what is was ten days ago; it was not sweet then." Nearing the east end of the town the ground was not so bad, and at the market-place it was clean enough, and there was nothing much to grumble about; but still there was a sort of an unhealthy feeling, and my spirits were down at seeing the ruins, the misery and the alteration in everything. I looked in vain for the fairly good houses and the enclosures with their nice

shady trees that used to exist at the west end of the market-green. Ras Aloula's fine large establishment, that formerly covered the ledge of ground above the market, was in ruins, the bare walls and blackened timbers alone marking the spot where once used to be a well-ordered household. Also, as if man had not done enough mischief to the place, nature had also her turn, and a large part of the market-green had disappeared into the Assam river, great falls of earth and rock having taken place and quite altered the aspect of the river at the ford and the steep road out of the bed of the river to the top of the bank.

I made my way to the house of old Ledj Mertcha, King Johannes' late envoy to England, where I had been invited to stay. The old man was away at Cairo seeing Lord Cromer on business concerning his new and less powerful master Ras Mangesha, and I received a hearty welcome from his wife, a venerable and most stately old dame whom I had known before. Time had dealt lightly with her, and she was still the cheerful and hospitable old party as formerly, despite the miseries and troubles she had passed through, her home having been sacked by the Italian native troops when General Baratieri paid his first visit to Adowa, and instead of the granaries being full and the cattle-yard with many occupants, the one was nearly empty and the other reduced to three ploughing bullocks and two heifers, with no sheep and only one milch goat that only gave enough milk for the youngest great niece. I soon made myself at home, and shortly after my arrival I had enough to do in welcoming old friends who I had met before on my former visits to Adowa or in other parts of the North. Hardly one of them came empty handed, and the larder was soon full—fish, flesh and fowl, eggs and bread, honey and cakes, hydromel and beer. These presents were not made with any intention of getting anything in return, but out of pure friendship, and although there are many of the Abyssinians that will bring a perfect stranger a present to get something larger or more valuable in exchange, it is not the same with all, and it may be compared to leaving cards on a new comer in country society in England more than anything else. I have given a full account of Ledj Mertcha's house elsewhere and I was very comfortable in it as soon as I got rid of most of the insects, which disappeared after a plentiful use of "Keating."

My first visit next morning was to the officials of the Holy Trinity Church who had kindly sent me food and a couple of

sheep soon after my arrival. The two head men who act as magistrates of the town, and among other duties administer the whole of the church lands in Adowa and its neighbourhood, feed the priests and are responsible for the funds and money offerings, bear the titles of Melaka Berhanet (Angel of Light) Fisaha Zeon and Aleka (Chief) Gabra Selassie (servant of the Trinity). In all small judgments and church disputes regarding money their decision is final, but in civil cases an appeal can be made first to Ras Aloula, and if the disputants are then not satisfied, to Ras Mangesha the prince of Tigré. I was very well received by them, and during my stay at Adowa I had very many opportunities of conversing with them on the state of the country and what had taken place, and I can thoroughly appreciate the hardships they had all gone through and their wretched position compared to 1884 when King Johannes was undisputed master of the whole country and treated the people with some consideration.

The churches at Adowa are larger than those usually found in the majority of the Abyssinian towns, and that of the Holy Trinity is the largest one that I have seen in the country covering a very large area. The enclosing wall is also well built of nearly twelve feet in height, and the length of the rectangular space is about two hundred and fifty yards by about one hundred and twenty. The doors that give entrance to the enclosure are very large, and nearly always kept closed so as to enable people on foot to enter; there are small postern gates of about four feet in height and about two feet and a half higher than the road, so as to prevent stray beasts from entering and also to prevent mounted people from making a high road of the churchyard when going to and fro to the east and west of the town. I shall only give a short description of one of the churches, as those of the Virgin Mary, Saint Michael and St George are not nearly so old nor so curious and well decorated. I had visited the church of the Holy Trinity before and described it in my book "1883 to 1887 in the Soudan" and I found it unchanged, and I am glad to say not as I was led to believe by the late Mr Bent with a tin roof made out of old Kerosine oil tins. It must have been while he was there under a state of repair as it is now again well thatched with straw, with its top for about ten feet made with copper sheets the same as used for putting on the bottom of wooden ships, and the summit crowned with a well-made eight pointed iron cross.

The paintings on the inner circular wall are still in a good state of preservation, and I was still amused at the subjects portrayed. Abyssinian art is entirely of the Byzantine or tapestry order, and the colours always most gaudy, and the shading primitive in the extreme. Good men are always depicted with a full face, those of wicked people in profile. Besides church subjects from the New Testament and pictures of Our Saviour, the Crucifixion, the Virgin Mary and different saints, including Saint George and the Dragon, and Saint Michael, battle scenes are very common; the defeat of the Egyptians being a most popular one, and always greatly admired. The devil is always another subject that the painters are very fond of, and he offers a great field for their very lively imagination: He has horns, tail and cloven hoof the same as in the illustrated Ingoldsby Legends; so in reality he may have these awkward additions to his person. There is one really good picture of him carrying away a very pretty girl, which if in England, would find its way to the police court for a magistrate's opinion whether it was high art or indecent. I am afraid that it would come under the latter heading, although the artist only intended that it should read a moral lesson.

The battle scenes are well worth reproduction, as giving a very good idea of the manœuvres in use by the Abyssinians against their enemies, the phalanx, cavalry charge, mounted infantry in action, skirmishing hand-to-hand fighting are all given, and not one dead belonging to their own men, but heaps of the enemy: evidently Mr Kruger's accounts of his battles against his enemies are of the same sort. The artillery which is used by the enemies of the Abyssinians is not of a very effective description, as all the shells are seen flying a long way overhead, and far in the rear of the advancing troops. By seeing these pictures, the young Abyssinian is taught to believe that a fight against an invader is not such a dangerous undertaking, that the shells do not burst and only make a noise, and that no Abyssinian is harmed, and that many of their enemy are slain, and that the easiest way of procuring a rifle and cartridges, the height of every small Abyssinians' ambition, is to engage in warfare against a foreigner.

Within this church are also stored the trophies taken from the Egyptians, flags, drums, bugles, and other things. The Abyssinian drums and long trumpets, and the large processional crosses used during the religious festivals, are also kept between the outer and inner walls, and the church is

more like a picture gallery and a museum of military trophies than a sacred edifice.

There is in the inner courtyard which surrounds the church, a large belfry which contains several large bells nearly all of recent construction, the largest being made in 1881 on the Continent, and in one corner of the courtyard there is a very old tree, from its branches hang several large flatstones which when struck by a piece of hard and thick wood, give out a metallic sound that can be heard at a great distance. These stones take the place of bells in nearly all the Abyssinian churches, different notes are got from different sized stones, the deep tones from the thicker stones, and the small thin ones only giving a low clear note.

The churchyard was very foul-smelling, owing to the number of Abyssinians that had been buried there after the battle of Adowa; the bodies had only a slight covering of earth over them, and many of the extremities were protruding, while in one of the deserted gate-houses several corpses remained without any attempt at interment. Under a common white cloth soldier's tent, were the graves of Kenezmatch Abeina and Kenezmatch Tafessa, belonging to King Menelek's army, who were killed when attacking General Arimondi's division; before I finally left Adowa the tent was blown down during a great storm and no one put it up again, so their last resting place would soon be lost.

The day after my arrival at Adowa, I made the first of my many visits to the battlefield, perhaps the most disagreeable task I ever had to perform in my life, one position being more foul smelling and disgusting than another. A burying party of Italian engineers had been allowed by the Abyssinians to come and inter the dead, but the condition of the corpses prevented them from being moved, and a few loose stones were their only covering which, instead of facilitating decomposition, only retarded it; not half of the bodies had been attended to, and in some places, putrescent masses held together by ragged clothes marked the details of the fight. Not a single body of the Mahommedan Gallas had been touched, and the carcases of their horses and mules were thickly strewn around the different Italian positions. I used to be sick half-a-dozen times in the day, and I used to loathe my work, and my faithful Hadgi Ali, and my Abyssinian guides used to tie their cloths round their nostrils and mouths and ask me if I had not seen enough.

Bird and animal life was absent, they even could not face

the horrible Golgotha, and the hyenas had long ago left the district to procure something more tempting than what the battlefield offered them. I have given a full description of the battle elsewhere, so will leave this gruesome sight, its recollections will ever remain as if seared in my memory with a hot iron, and the details as I write are as vivid to me as if I was again on the spot. There are some things in one's life that never can be forgotten, and this is one of them that I shall carry with me as long as I live, and shudder when I think of the thousands of white, black and brown men that lay dotted about this lovely country, that gave up their lives to gratify an electioneering policy in a far-off land. It is no wonder when one thinks of the misery entailed that the African policy of Italy has so far been unpopular; they have had a bitter lesson, and I admire them greatly for sticking to their colony, closing the page which was nearly full and turning over a new leaf on which a permanent success has nearly been written and a bright future is before them, and they no doubt will reap a good harvest in the immediate future.

Wandering about Adowa was a sad business, and many of the streets were entirely deserted, the Mahomedan quarter was tenantless and the houses with the exception of two or three were unroofed and in ruins. The neat gardens were gone and choked up with rank weeds and vegetation, many of the trees had been cut down for firewood, but here and there were some giant with too thick a stem to be easily broken up, a little shade remained and an idea could be formed of what a pleasant place it used to be. The fruit trees were nearly all broken down except in the garden belonging to Ras Mangesha, and every conceivable wanton mischief had been perpetrated.

On turning to my notes I find that Adowa was first looted and partly burnt by Dedjatch Hag Ambessa (which means the remnant of a lion) of Adteclesan of the Hamasen, a noted bad character. He was sent to Adowa in December 1889 by General Baldissera on his first command in Erithrea. He also stole many things out of the churches that had been placed there for safety, the most heinous offence in the eyes of the Abyssinians, and he acted entirely against the orders of the General who sent him. General Orero succeeded General Baldissera in January 1890 and immediately marched on Adowa which he did no harm to, and arrested Dedjatch Hag Ambessa who was imprisoned at the Italian penal

settlement of Assab for his cruelties. It was again plundered in 1894 by the native troops under General Baratieri, which seemed to have been a wanton bit of cruelty and a very unjustifiable act, as the whole of the male population had gone to meet the General to welcome him and give in their allegiance, and it was done in their absence when they could not defend their property. It was after the looting of Adowa that Ras Mangesha made his forward movement against the Italian colony, and ended up in his defeat at the battles of Coatit and Senafe in January 1895.

Instead of King Menelek's troops treating Adowa as a friendly town, they did every possible mischief they possibly could to it, only sparing the churches and unroofing the houses and breaking up the doors and windows for firewood, being too lazy to go and fetch wood from the surrounding hills. The people of Adowa and its environs, always disliked the Amharans and southern Abyssinians, and after the battle of Adowa they had still greater cause for their aversion, and King Menelek and his followers are now more unpopular than ever with the whole of the north.

The towns-people were always noted for being a civilised and industrious race, and in 1884 a good deal of work was done there and the town could boast of good masons, carpenters, blacksmiths, weavers of cloth, jewellers, saddlers and other workmen. The women were also industrious and their embroidery was amongst the best in Abyssinia, their mats and grass work were also noted. I tried to get specimens of the things made in Adowa, and I found that nearly all the population had fled or migrated to more settled districts, and even the weekly Saturday market, where everything could formerly be purchased, and where thousands of people used to congregate from all parts, was now only visited by a few hundred with the most meagre supplies. Stay at home people little know what a nearly ruined country means, and what a sad sight it is and the peculiar hunted look the poor people have, as if they were wondering what the next calamity would be that was to overtake them.

A few days after my arrival at Adowa I received a letter from Ras Mangesha inviting me to visit him at Abbi Addi, and to the marriage of his daughter to the son of Ras Hagos the Governor of the province of Tembien, of which he is hereditary prince, the title having belonged to his family for many centuries. I was very pleased to get away from Adowa on account of its unsanitary state, and although it was the

height of the rainy season the 10th of July when I left, and the rivers might be troublesome and difficult to cross, I had no hesitation in undertaking the journey. Ras Aloula had given orders that I was to be provided with an escort if I required one, but I very much prefer travelling without, as more can be seen of the country and the peasants are less suspicious and more friendly. I took a man furnished me by the "Angel of Light" as a guide, and I doubt very much if he had ever travelled with mules fairly heavily laden, as he led me due south over the mountain at the back of Adowa and down a nearly perpendicular cliff into the valley of the Farras Mai river, the mules had to be unladen several times and the baggage let down with ropes and then again laden for a short distance and the operation repeated. The Farras Mai valley is of large size and divides the high Chelunko district from Adowa. Chelunko is a series of high plateaux and small valleys which used formerly to be one large area of cultivation, but what with the rinderpest, famine, cholera and the depredations of the Italian troops when they attempted to conquer Tigré and again by Menelek's troops while at Adowa and on their return south, the whole day's march was through ruined and blackened villages.

We had our usual rain and thunderstorm which drenched us, and the servants sat up all night under the flaps of my tent, and I was glad when morning broke clear and bright which enabled us to get away early for our trying march across the uninhabited country and the feverish Werri river to Sabandas where our camping place was to be. This district has a very bad name, as anyone who is discontented with the local ruler waylays the merchants and villagers from a distance on their way to market, and robs them of their goods so as to bring the governor of the province into dispute. They do not touch their neighbours or levy black mail on them, as they would at once be caught, but those from other districts suffer, and as these robbers always disguise themselves by daubing their faces over with white or red mud, they are not easily recognised when they have a clean face. The transformation is of course the work of a moment, as the first puddle serves either to put on the disguise or wash it off again, and I came across three men cleaning themselves who were talking to some people on their way to market, who they had evidently mistaken at a distance for strangers. There is nothing to be ashamed of in turning robber for the time, but it is a peculiar way of bringing their grievances

before the authorities, and it would not do in a more civilised country. I have never heard of Europeans being hurt, but Greeks and Armenians have suffered, chiefly for the reason that they have been dressed like Abyssinians, and there is very little difference in colour between a dirty Greek and an Abyssinian.

The descent down from the Chelunko heights to the hot wind protected Werri valley is very trying, and the jungle was full of horse flies and seroot flies that nearly drove the transport mules frantic. We passed a lot of merchants with transport animals and bullocks, and all those that had white hides were simply covered with blood marks, and the poor beasts were suffering terribly. I looked at my mule when I dismounted at the banks of the river, and her stomach was one mass of red and covered with flies. The river is only about 40 yards broad, and the valley about 400 yards across and studded with little islands as, when the river is in full flood, it nearly fills the bottom of the valley in places ; it is a most dangerous river in the rainy season as the spates come down in quick succession and in five minutes, where the water was only about three feet deep, it may rise to seven or more and in half an hour rise to ten feet. The upper catchment of this river is fairly large, and its outlet narrow with very steep sides, so the very tropical rains which will measure several inches in a few hours, make the rise and fall very rapid. The morning flood marks showed the river was impassable at an early hour, but at the time we arrived it was very little above its ordinary level, and we got over the three crossings caused by the river's winding course in safety. Not only has this valley got a bad name for robbers and fevers, but also during the heavy rains for crocodiles and lions ; the latter are driven up from the low country by the rains and the former come up from the Tacazze to breed and lay their eggs and some few of them remain in the deep pools the whole year round.

It was lucky we crossed in time as a thunderstorm was going on to the east when we began rising to the Sabandas ridge which would soon make the river again impassable. It was very unfortunate that both my aneroid and thermometer had been broken as I should have liked to have taken the height of the Sabandas pass where it crosses the ridge, and the highest peak immediately above the pass must have been a good 800 feet higher and over 10,000 feet in altitude. The wind was bitter cold, and the difference between the

temperature at the river, which was a moist tropical heat, and this wind-swept group of mountains was very great. At the lower level I had to unbutton my karki coat, and at the ridge, where I remained for lunch in a grove of shumac trees, I had to put on my thick ulster coat and was not a bit too warm. These shumac trees were the first I had seen in Abyssinia, and the vegetation around was nearly Alpine in its character. The country was full of small game, and we saw klipspringer, oribi and duiker, antelopes and kudoo are reported to be far from common. The thunderstorm that had been travelling from the east, here overtook us, and it commenced with a violent hail storm, with some of the stones as large as hazel nuts; it then snowed for a short time and then turned into sleet and rain of the very wettest sort, and, in an hour's time, it passed away and the sun came out brightly; this was particularly welcome, as we were all drenched to the skin and my ulster thoroughly saturated.

The view looking southwards from the ridge was most lovely, and the further the storm went westwards the more the landscape came into view. There was a glorious panorama of mountains to the east and north with a glimpse of the country to the west of Axum and the Tacazze valley, and the mountains in the province of Schire. South, our view was blocked by the ridge, and to the east south-east a glimpse of the Gheralta range could be obtained, and the hills in the vicinity of the natural fortress and state prison of Amba Salama where so many famous Abyssinian political prisoners have spent their last days on earth. The town of Sabandas is another of these curious, bold, upstanding, red, sandstone upheavals for which Abyssinia is renowned. After climbing up from the Werri river the country becomes nearly entirely composed of red sandstone mixed with grey and yellow schistose rock and lines of quartz, and what with the vivid greens of the cultivation and all the trees being in full leaf, the landscape is a charmingly bright and variously coloured one, and the whole scenery is very grand and magnificent.

The top of Sabandas mountain is quite flat, and it has a church and several groups of houses on its summit that can only be reached by one narrow path which could be easily defended by a few men against a very large force. There is no summit within miles that is higher, and even its lower ledges are not topped by anything nearer than about three miles. Curiously enough, on the very top of this mountain is a spring of beautiful clear water which gives an

unfailing supply the whole year round, and the place where it descends to the next ledge is marked by what looks at a distance to be a smudge of green on the surface of the red rock. The mountain is defended naturally, and no human aid has been given to add to its defences, and the sides are scarped as if by some clever engineer. About one hundred and fifty feet below the summit is another ledge with two broad extremities on which houses have been built, another two to three hundred feet below is a larger ridge which has also been built on, and then the land gradually slopes towards the plain, three more villages nestling amongst the trees on the banks of two watercourses with perpendicular sides towards the mountain which join in front of the village; the triangular piece of ground, formed by the base of the mountain and the two streams, is terraced and well-cultivated, and the whole position could easily be defended by a few against a large force, and as the inhabitants keep their stocks of grain on the mountain, which can also be cultivated in parts, they could hold out longer than a blockading force that would have to bring their supplies from a distance.

It was a horribly cold night and everything was damp and clammy and it rained nearly the whole night and again we had a fine morning with a warm sun, and all hands set to work drying things, the bushes being covered with our wet clothes. Schimper here caught me up, he having been detained five hours at the Werri before he could cross; we then proceeded on our way to Abbi Addi and arrived there just as a terrific thunderstorm broke, and we took refuge in one of the numerous large sandstone caves that are hollowed out by the decomposition of centuries of the softer stone, and which offer shelter to the numerous flocks of sheep and goats which graze round the town. These caves are not used as habitations, but they could soon be made fit to live in; they are nearly all semi-circular in form, and run back from ten to as much as fifty feet in the interior of the mountain, and are of all heights, from a few feet to as much as thirty or forty feet. They only want the face closing to make good cattle-sheds or store-houses. As they are quite close to the market, in very wet weather the people use them for camping in when selling their goods.

Abbi Addi is a most lovely situated town and most picturesque, and I enjoyed my stay there in spite of the terrific thunderstorms which occurred daily, and which rather

spoilt the festivities. However, we had a very fine day for the wedding, and the sight was a very curious one, and it is not often that a European has the chance of seeing one of the same grandeur. The town is built on an oval plateau spur of the mountains and has only three roads by which it can be approached from the low ground and by one road from the high mountain above. They are all very narrow and can easily be defended, and it has been the head quarters of the rulers of Tembien since the earliest ages of Abyssinian history; the plateau is about three quarters of a mile in breadth by about six hundred yards in depth, and on it are found the church and the residences of the Ras and the upper classes. The rest of the population live on the lower clefts in the plateau, and the houses nestle thickly on the tree-covered lower slopes and amongst the giant boulders that have fallen away from the mountain. Here the market, which is held weekly, is placed on a series of small grass plots also broken up by large boulders which are made use of by the frequenters as protection against the rain and sun. The chief things sold in the market are coffee, red pepper, large quantities of butter and honey, the district being famous for the quantity of bees. It also does a large trade with the south, especially with Socota, and it is also on the main road from Adowa and Axum to the southern portions of Abyssinia.

We pitched camp at the foot of the plateau, as it was impossible to get the mules to the top with a load on either side of them, and immediately the rain was over I went up to Ras Hagos's house to pay my respects to Ras Mangesha who was stopping with him. Ras Mangesha is the exact likeness of what his father King Johannes used to be in his younger days, and there can be no disputing the parentage. He has the same nervous look and peculiar restless eyes, which are never still and always watching everything that passes. He has the same reputation as his father, namely being a good director of troops on the battlefield and ever ready to make use of any blunder made in the manœuvres of his adversary. His profile is decidedly a pleasing one, and of the true Abyssinian type, and his full face would also be called good looking, but there is a want of firmness about the mouth, and the set on of the chin lacks that look of determination which was so notable in Ras Aloula's face, and those of true leaders of men. I was received most kindly and welcomed to his country, and was told that I was to

consider myself as his guest while in the north, and was after the usual bottle or brilla as it is called, of tedj, told I could go, and that he wanted to have a long talk to me to-morrow. On my arrival at camp, I found that a present of food had arrived for me, two sheep, several horns of tedj, some 300 breads of all sorts, chickens, eggs, honey, chutney, barley for my mules, and a large bunch of splendid bananas, a great treat, as farther north the trees had all been destroyed, slashed in half by the Galla soldiers.

The next morning Lieutenant Mulazzani arrived from Adi Qualla with presents from the Italian Government for Ras Mangesha and his wife, the niece of Queen Taiton, and the daughter of Ras Woly the governor of the Yejju province, and part of Lasta; there ought to have been a grand marriage on this occasion, but the ceremony took place in a hurry semi-privately for political reasons, the bridegroom not being particularly willing, as he was made to divorce his former wife whom he was very fond of. Both Mulazzani and I were agreed that it showed, not only want of character, but how entirely Ras Mangesha feared the king, and what little hold he had over Tigré. Abyssinian provinces and the kingdom are held, if need be, by the sword alone, and from what I could hear of the present ruler of Tigré, he was not the man to keep his kingdom together, either by the sword because he was feared, or by clemency because he was loved by all. His double dealings with the Italians made him distrusted, and his appeals as being King Johannes's son and successor nominated on his death bed, had no weight with English officials, unless he was capable of carving his way to the throne with his sword, the same as his father had done.

My meeting with the Ras the next morning came off, and I was put in a very awkward position, as he asked me to take charge of letters for him for the English Government, which I utterly declined to do at the time, as I had nothing to do with them, and I informed him that my business was to find out for the "Manchester Guardian" newspaper all about Abyssinia, King Menelek and the people, and until I did so I was not a free agent, and then it would not be possible to say anything to the Government except to answer any questions put to me. I was told that as the festivities were about to commence, that he would postpone talking further to me on business, till I should visit him at Macalle after the return of Ledg Mertcha from

Cairo with an answer from Lord Cromer. I had also a long and interesting conversation regarding the battle of Adowa and the part he took in it, and having been over the field, I could follow his movements and those of his troops most clearly; they must have had a trying time of it, as many of them did not get back till the next day. Many of them obtained their loot in the shape of rifles and cartridges, and personal property belonging to the Italians, and went back to their villages without returning to Adowa, so that they could defend their property against the Southern army on their way home, and also to give them the opportunity of putting their grain and more valuable effects into a place of safety, before the march south of King Menelek's troops commenced. The Ras had no idea of his total loss which was very heavy, and I had seen many wounded Abyssinians already in Tigré, that were certain to die of their injuries. I was always being bothered to look at wounds which would not heal, they all had some foreign substance in them, many too deeply seated to remove without an operation, and on two occasions I pulled out a bit of cloth, and a small bit of leather. I gave away quantities of bottles of carbolic oil and carbolic lotion, and yards of lint and cotton for dressings. The moment the wounds got cleaned they soon closed, as the Abyssinian with few exceptions (syphilitic subjects of course excepted) heal rapidly. The loss in the different fights against the Italians by the northern population was very great, and never will be known, and I do not think there is a hamlet, that has not lost one or more representatives. With a warlike population like the Abyssinians, this is not so much thought of as among the low country Mahomedans, who always seek revenge for the loss of one of their family, and it makes them more dangerous for Europeans to deal with afterwards when peace is made, as with some tribes of the low countries blood feuds will last for a long time. The Abyssinians are not revengeful and will take a thrashing, and then acknowledge their master and think none the worse of him, but they hate being ridiculed and are then always sulky and not to be depended upon.

The marriage festival was held in the house and large courtyard belonging to Ras Hagos and was a very grand entertainment, people coming for miles to see it, and many thousands of natives were present. The women of Abbi Addi had been preparing food for several days before, and

processions of women bearing food and jars of tedj were passing our camp (which we had removed to the plateau) for a couple of days before the feast. Mullazani and I, dressed in our best clothes, arrived at the house about half-past ten and were received at the gate by a guard of soldiers. We were conducted through the courtyard which was turned into a large bower by being covered in with branches of trees and new red and white shammas and there was hardly moving room, the place was so crowded. The guests made the usual remarks about us, and considering Mulazzani was dressed in his Italian uniform and peace had not been ratified they made no bad allusions to him, which I thought very civil. I particularly asked my two interpreters to be very careful to translate all the remarks made, and they did not hear one word that could not be repeated or that would have given offence to any Italian. I being much the taller of the two was recognised as the Inglesi, and I was patted on the back and called "bono Johnny," a word they have not forgotten since the 1868 expedition.

We then entered the big rectangular room in which the Rases and head man were waiting to receive us on a raised platform and we after shaking hands were given chairs in the post of honour next to Ras Mangesha. Music, singing and dancing of the usual Abyssinian description then commenced while the feast was being got ready, and hydromel in glass bottles was handed round, the tedj bearer always pouring out a little of the liquid into the palm of his hand and drinking it to show it was not poisoned. These brillas are nearly all made in Austria of colored glass and are like a small wine decanter without a stopper and hold about a pint. Their necks are very small and they take a long time to fill. When once they are handed to the guest he takes a sip and then places the thumb over the neck of the bottle to keep out the flies that are always very numerous on these occasions. The beauty of drinking out of a brilla is that it need not be done in a hurry and one can be made to last a long time, and perhaps an Abyssinian will drink four or five full while a European is getting through one. The tedj has different effects on different natures. To one it may be an intoxicant to another it has only a soporific effect, and it depends greatly on the quantity of geshu plant used to bring on fermentation.

A table was placed for us on the platform, and, after washing our hands in the same style as the Turks and Arabs do, we were supplied with plates, knives and forks, but no

spoon, the thin tef breads being used instead. A basket of the best white tef was given us and the feast commenced with raw beef, the famous "brundo" as it is called. We saw the living animals for the feast in the courtyard when we entered not an hour before, and here were lumps of them being brought in in baskets warm but not quivering. The best parts are the loin and beef steaks, the fillets which are the tenderest are kept for the old and nearly toothless men and the women, not being considered warrior's meat. Whenever I go to an Abyssinian feast I always take another stomach with me in the shape of one of my servants, who squats down behind my chair, and I pass him all the wild beast's food and things I cannot eat. To refuse the offer of raw meat is not polite, so it has to be received but need not be eaten. I am so accustomed to see raw meat eaten that I do not mind it, but I well remember the first time I saw the bluish red lump of smoking meat (it was a very cold day) brought me that I felt far from well. I had seen years ago in the Soudan hungry Hadendowies cut open a gazelle that was gasping out its last breath, and take out the liver, heart and kidneys, and break the gall bag over all and swallow its warm etceteras, but I had not to do it myself. These half savage Moslem plain men cook their meat, and these half civilized Christians take off the sharp edge of their appetite with raw before they begin on other things; the only thing they eat with raw meat is the hottest red pepper, a good big table spoonful being an ordinary accompaniment, so the pepper may help to cook the meat when it gets inside. The large bit of meat is held in the left hand, it is then placed to the mouth and a bit taken between the teeth which is then cut off by a small sharp knife. As I did not eat brundo and I was very hungry, I sent my servant out to bring me a piece of fillet of beef roasted over the embers, and in a few minutes he returned with a delicious tender bit which Mulazzani and I eagerly devoured; we then had devilled bones red with chilli, which we had to scrape off, and it was even then too hot to be enjoyable, stews of chickens and kid with chutney made out of red pepper, pea-flour, onions and fresh butter, not at all a bad dish, and then stewed trongies or shaddocks with honey and bananas, and the whole was washed down with many brillas of tedj. The cloth was then removed, not from the table, as it had none, but from around the platform. The aristocracy are always protected from the evil eye, their invited guests are not supposed to have any-

thing so rude and as many as twenty of us were thus screened off.

The bridegroom was about seventeen years old, and, as his father was present at the feast, etiquette prevented him from sitting down with us, and he had his meal in a private apartment at the back. Glasses of native spirit were passed round, also champagne, brandy and sundry European liqueurs, and we sat and watched the smaller fry being fed ; they came into the room according to military rank and sat down in companies of about six, the higher officers nearest the platform and so in order down the room, the discipline was perfect, everyone knew his place and there was no crowding and pushing, a well behaved and orderly crowd, their behaviour might well be copied by people in England when they attend some large entertainment. I am afraid that a great many of our upper classes are a pushing lot, and these uncivilised Abyssinians would go so far as to call them rude and bad mannered.

A basket with a large pile of brown breads or angera, as they are called in Tigré, was placed before each group, and two of them were taken off the pile to serve as plates for the red pepper which was poured out of a large cow horn, and for the chutney which was taken out of a large jar with the hand, hands having been made before spoons, then large lumps of raw meat were brought in and given to the men and the dinner commenced. Knives, daggers and swords were used to cut up the meat and tedj servers presented each guest with a brilla, and as soon as they were empty others were brought ; so the feast went on, relays of guests taking the places of those that were finished.

Mulazzani and I were both asked to smoke, but we preferred indulging in our cigarettes outside and seeing what was going on in the courtyard and smoking there, so we could offend no one. The cows had all been killed, and some thirty hides and pools of blood marked the place where the animals had fallen and been cut up ; the dogs were quarrelling over the entrails, and as soon as the hides were removed and the blood sprinkled over with earth, not a trace of the victims of the feast would be left. The people seemed to be all in the best of spirits and most happy, dancing and singing going on, and some little chaff and rather rough horse play being indulged in, but no quarrelling. We returned to the big room when the feeding was just finishing and the baskets being removed with little of their contents left.

The marriage then commenced, the bridegroom and his supporters marched in first, all clad in splendid garments of silk and satin with lion mane capes and richly decorated shields covered with silver filagree work and bosses, the swords also being highly ornamented with silver and silver gilt patterns. The procession was headed by several trumpeters blowing their long trumpets, the same shape as seen in old Biblical pictures and that blew down the walls of Jericho. They halted in front of the slightly raised platform, and then the bridegroom came forward and kissed the hand of Ras Mangesha and that of his father.

The bride's procession then entered by a side door from the women's quarters, and their approach was heralded by all the women in the courtyard and in the big room began their shrill and ear-splitting cry which sounds like lu-lu-lu repeated frequently. The bride was supported by eight young girls holding up a large piece of green silk which completely covered the whole of their faces, only allowing their dresses to be seen ; they also came up to the place where we were all sitting and stopped before Ras Mangesha. The silk was not wide enough to allow all of us to see, so Mulazzani and I came closer and lifted up one of the hanging corners, as we did not think much of a wedding unless we could see the bride and her bridesmaids. We were well rewarded for the trouble we took, as I do not remember ever to have seen a lot of prettier native girls assembled together. The bride was beautifully dressed in light blue silk and had splendid gold jewellery consisting of necklaces, bangles and other ornaments. She had black wavy hair worn short, and small gold crosses on each temple and in the centre of the forehead just at the place where the hair commences to grow; otherwise, with the exception of small gold and diamond button earrings, she had no other head ornaments. Her age was about sixteen, and she had a fine, tall, well-developed and good shaped figure. Her complexion was not nearly so dark as many southern Europeans, and there was a distinct rose-coloured flush on her cheeks. She had beautiful white teeth and large black flashing eyes, and was altogether a most charming young lady. The profile was rather Semitic and the features looked as if they would last and not get spoilt by getting stout. We were both greatly taken with her and voted that with our long experience of Abyssinian girls, we had never seen any more beautiful but some equally as good looking.

There were three others that were also very good looking and the others were much above the average. I met one of the prettiest of the bridesmaids some time afterwards at Macalle, and she was very nice and clever for an Abyssinian girl; as she could read and write and talked a few words of Arabic, quite enough to get on with without an interpreter, her face was also entirely Semitic and her complexion the very lightest of browns, and altogether she was a very good specimen of the true bred North Country Abyssinian woman. No wonder that some of the Italian officers simply rave about how charming the Abyssinian female sex are, and what a future there is before them; they are no doubt very clever, and if taken in hand before they get to a certain age, they can be taught anything, and also to be true and faithful. It is the same with the boys if taken in hand young enough, as they are quick at picking up any language or any trade, but if they return to their country before their characters are really formed, they suddenly relapse and pick up all the bad habits of the uneducated and brutal soldiery, and remember also at the same time everything bad they have learnt in Europe.

There was no religious ceremony, and the bride's hand was put into that of the bridegroom by her father the Ras who said a few words to the pair—he then kissed his daughter, and the bride and bridegroom kissed the Ras's hand; they then both did the same to Ras Hagos and the business was finished. The bride's procession then returned to their quarters to the accompaniment of the trumpets and the lu-lu-lus of the women, and the bridegroom sat down and the dancing and music again commenced. The minstrels with their peculiar stringed instruments, sang extemporary verses in honour of the two Rases, the bride and bridegroom, and the two foreign guests. These minstrels are no doubt of very ancient origin, and date away back to the very oldest of times when singing first came into vogue, long, long before the Troubadours and long before our earliest times. They sing of the deeds of the great ruler Sabagadis, the modern hero of Tigré, and of famous people of ancient times; they make extemporary verses on whatever festivity is going on, and they touch on the topical points of the day. When we left, they followed Mulazzani and I to our camp, and they said he was a jolly good fellow, and that the Italians were brave people and they sang all sorts of nice things about the English and what a particularly nice

man I was, for which they got from us two dollars, and it ended up by our having to give them four dollars to get rid of them, as they said they had a lot more nice things to say about us, and we were perfectly tired of their monotonous one-stringed instrument. I never knew before that one little bit of sheep's bowel could make such a lot of different noises.

One of the minstrels was rather clever and could imitate on the one string the animal from which it came, which was not to be surprised at, and a great many more animals and birds as well. I believe this was not considered by his brother minstrels to be high art, but only on a par with our social entertainers, but it amused us a great deal more than all their historic pieces. They, as well as their audience, get greatly excited over the deeds of Sabagadis and also over the death of King Johannes at Gallabat, whom they only really appreciated after his death, certainly the country never enjoyed such a peaceful period in modern history, as they did under this king.

The dances that were given were some of them highly uninteresting and some of them very suggestive and indecent, but this could not be wondered at, as it was a wedding-day and ponds full of tedj had been consumed, as the hospitality had been on the most lavish scale. We had war dances, the meeting of two warriors, their mimic combat, and the death of one of them; a joint dance between men and women, which I must not describe, and dances by women, all of the shuffle order, time being kept by clapping the hands together. The dance de ventre is of course suggestive but the women being well clothed, it is not nearly so bad as that danced formerly in Khartoum, where the girls had nothing but a handful of beads to cover them. We left them going on with the festivities at about five o'clock, and they were continued long into the night, until a bad thunderstorm with heavy rain damped their ardour and drove them off to bed.

I met at Abbi-Addi the late King Johannes' jester, a very small dwarf, only three feet five inches in height, with a very well proportioned body, but with a very large head quite out of proportion to his size; my No. 7 helmet was a great deal too small for him. He was over fifty years of age and a very interesting well informed little man when not jesting, and was a great source of amusement to me both at Abbi-Addi and Macalle. He was enormously powerful, and on festal occasions when he used to get a little drunk, very quarrelsome; and then he used to pick out the biggest man of the

crowd that was annoying him, to go for. If he could once make good his charge and get between their legs, over they used to go, and while they were down he would get them round the neck with his powerful little arms and nearly strangle them. The fall of a giant at the hands of the midget, used always to be well received and there were then shouts for Barrambaras Marou, by which title he was known. If he failed in his charge, and was lifted off his feet and put under the man's arm and held head downwards, he used to scream like a naughty child, and promise to be good. He was greatly distrusted by some people, as he used always to tell his present master, Ras Mangesha, everything he heard, and he had found out many conspiracies during his life. On one occasion he told me he had hidden in a sack of grass, and listened to a meeting of conspirators and when they had gone to sleep, he went off and told King Johannes, and they were all arrested the same night, and all accused each other of treachery. He was very cunning, and nothing at first would induce him to come near me, but at last I won his confidence and afterwards he proved most useful on many occasions. He was married to a woman much over the average height, and his children were all good sized ones and his two younger brothers were also fine men, and stood greatly in awe of him, as he made them work very hard. He was a splendid rider and a very good judge of horse flesh, and his light weight allowed him to beat men who were perhaps better mounted. He was also a very decent shot, and had killed a good few dervishes, but he utterly refused to fight against the Italians. He saw the English once but was so frightened of the elephants and the Armstrong battery of guns, that he ran away and nothing could induce him to go near them again. About the first question he asked me was, where was my elephant, and I could not understand what he meant until he said he thought all rich Englishmen rode in boxes on elephants.

The view from Abbi-Addi of the Semien range was very grand; I tried to sketch the range but could not do it justice. During the middle part of the day, it was very often hidden by the rain and thunderstorms, but at sunrise and sunset good views could be obtained. The northern end of the range has a much greater altitude than the southern, and the slope from north to south is gradual. After a cold night the northern crest of Ras Detcham the highest peak was covered with snow which used to extend perhaps as much as 1500 feet down the slopes; the rising sun used to give it a pink glow,

by sunset this snow had melted all except a little at the very high peak, and in the sides of the valleys that seam its face. For three whole days when the sun was nearly always obscured the snow covered a very large area of the range, and once late in the afternoon, the sun came out quite brightly and the view of the snow clad range was lovely with its pink and opalescent colours, the lights remaining long after the sun had sunk behind the horizon, and then gradually changing from green, red, fire colour to blue black, till the last pink glow went out on the highest peak, aud the range stood up black against the backing of dark clouds. Through the glasses several big waterfalls are to be seen which are evidently formed by the melting of snow, as they are generally of greater volume when the sun is shining brightly than at any other time. No traveller has ever given us a really good description of the Semien country in the cold season, and I longed to visit it, but I had not the opportunity, and to cross the Tacazze in full flood is, I believe, quite impossible *vis-à-vis* to the country I was now in. There is one very high needle peak that can be seen from here, that rises from one of the lower mountains, that must be a grand sight when close to it. I tried to find out its name but none of the people that I asked could tell me, and Schimper also did not know, as he had never visited the northern part of Semien.

Adjoining our camp was a very peculiar little church, part of it was formed by giant boulders of rock and the rest built of ordinary masonry; this must have been of most ancient date, from the earliest Christian according to tradition. At the back of the boulders was a doorway, between two large rocks leading into a storeroom full of private and church property, and I was told that two immense wooden chests contained very old records and documents, which I should much have liked to examine, but I had not the time at my disposal. I came across a good number of these churches, partly built against rocks, but I never saw a really cave church nor any cave dwellings that are so much talked about by travellers. I have been in many of the so-called caves, but they are simply formed by a face being built to a hollow in the rock where the softer stone has decomposed from climatic influence, or where some stream that has changed its course in bygone ages has hollowed out the side of a cliff.

The peculiar semi rock dwellings in the Hamasen may have got their name from unobservant travellers, the real nature of these houses are far from rock dwellings; the top

denuded hard rock ridges are chosen by the inhabitants to build their houses against for many reasons, the ground on the top of these ridges dries quicker than further down the slopes; landslips which are of frequent occurrence on the lower slopes are also not known. The ridges are generally free from fever, and there are no mosquitos and a good view is always obtainable, so the crops in the valleys can be watched, also an enemy can be easier seen and the ridges are easier defended. Houses can be constructed with less trouble as a lean-to is the only side that has to be built up in order to make a habitation, and only a semi circular zareeba is required to protect the inmates and their flocks from wild animals. On several occasions I have climbed these ridges on the reverse face, and to my surprise when I had reached the top found I was on the top of a house, and looking down into a village.

I was told by a European lady who was living in the Hamasen, that on one occasion while she was sketching in one of these villages, a lion came and looked down from the top of the ridge, and she was very frightened that it would jump down into the zareeba. This animal was shot by one of the Abyssinians and she had the skin. I do not know whether it was a "match box" story or not, but at the time she related it, there were many lions to be found in the north and in that district they could be heard nightly. How many pretty tales are exploded in time and many an extraordinary thing is related, which had only a small amount of truth in it, and it is built on till a marvellous fairy story is the result, which falls to the ground when some less imaginative person explains it away.

The coffee gardens of Abbi Addi contain some of the best specimens of trees that I have ever came across, they are situated in the valley that is formed by one side of the plateau on which the town stands; the end of the valley at last turns into an enormous canyon with nearly perpendicular sides. It is only open to the west and is many degrees warmer than the surrounding heights, and all tropical fruits and flowers thrive luxuriantly in the sheltered spot. The banana gardens are numerous, and noted for their splendid bunches of fruit; they are of all kinds, from the small thin skinned luscious fruit that will hardly bear carrying for a short distance, to the large thick coated cooking sort. The small ones are dried in the sun and make quite a nice sweetmeat. Pomegranates, oranges, limes, shaddocks and figs,

are numerous and good, and everything in the shape of vegetables both tropical and temperate, thrive in the greatest profusion, tobacco of excellent quality is also grown, and this district seems to be most favoured by nature and would be a charming place, for a man tired of the troubles of civilised life to retire to, as he could procure everything in the way of food ; and if fond of nature could find the most varied assortment of floral, animal, bird and insect life. Good snipe, duck and goose shooting is to be had ; the francolins and guinea fowl are everywhere, many of the smaller antelope come within sight of the town, and the rock and ground squirrels are so tame that they come right up to the door of the houses.

I found the people all most kind and hospitable, and I shall always look back at the ten days spent here, as among the most pleasant of my life. Mulazzani and I went for daily walks while waiting for some Italian prisoners that were going to be handed over to him to take back to Erithrea, and at last they arrived, and a sorry sight they were, hatless, shoeless and clotheless, with a few rags only to cover them, dirty and unkempt. I shall always remember the meeting, everyone cried at seeing friends for the first time for so many weary months. I can imagine their feelings, having to come before their superior officer and myself a perfect stranger in the state they were in ; so that we could see how Italians appeared before the natives of the country, and what the natives must have then thought of the people who had fought against them.

It is to be hoped that no Europeans will again have to put up with what these poor people have had to go through. They were not badly treated, and they had enough food given them to eat, but of bad quality compared to what they were accustomed to ; but to wander about the country nearly naked, and to undergo the nearly tropical heat of the sun at mid-day, the bitter cold wind at night, and the rain and damp, without any prospect of immediate help or rescue, must have been very trying. We all set to work to see what we could do for them ; we had plenty of soap, and I had a razor to spare and we boiled water in zinc buckets, and they soon began to look better, and after a shave and getting rid of the majority of their hair with the insects it contained : the change was wonderful. The jokes they made, when they looked in a looking-glass for the first time for months, were never ending, and I must say that they

were cheery enough, when they once were certain that their troubles were over. I kept a change of clothes and a change of boots, and handed the rest of my kit over to them. I had some cloth with me, and needles and thread, and we made native trousers out of it, and in a few hours they all had something to put on ; Mulazzini also giving them everything that he could spare.

The two cooks and my servants were all busy getting them a good meal ready, and I never saw men enjoy eating more than they did. Soup, mutton, stewed chicken, curry and rice, sardines, preserved fruit, biscuits, bread, tedj, brandy, tea, coffee and other things, they never thought that they would ever see again. Seventeen of them sat down and we waited upon them, they drank the health of the King of Italy, their country and of Mulazzani, the Queen's health, England's health and mine; they sang songs, smoked cigarettes, cigars and pipes, and were all as jolly as possible, and I do not believe that ever such a curiously dressed crowd of soldiers sat down to dinner before, or people more heartily thankful that they now count the days when they would see their own kith and kin again. They said that for five months, they had not had a proper wash or seen a bit of soap, and had nothing to eat but bread, meat not properly cooked and red pepper, and had not had a smoke, and had slept on the hard ground, or in some insect-infested house or cattle-shed. We got a lot of dry hay and some blankets, and made them a good soft bed in a big tent, and they all turned in while Mulazzani and I sat up, as it was our last night together.

It was very lucky of Mulazzani getting these prisoners back, and a great feather in his hat for the diplomatic way in which he had played his cards. Next morning early saw him start, and when I said good-bye I had hoped to see him again before long, but up till to-day we have never met. I owe Mulazzani a great deal for all his kindness to me, and in this officer, Italy has a gallant, intelligent servant, who thoroughly understands the natives and their ways, and a man that is bound to make his mark in the annals of the colony of Erithrea, if he ever has the opportunity given him.

I was to leave the next day, but it rained so hard that travelling was impossible, and it was not till the next morning that I got away. I was sorry for one reason that I was detained, as on the extra day I remained, Ras Michael or Waldenkel, who I have mentioned so often before, was let

out from the place he was confined in, while the marriage festivities had been going on. His power was broken, but he is a sort of individual who would spoil any party. I had not seen him for nearly twenty years, and he sent word to say he was coming to pay me a visit, and before I could say I did not want to see him he came into my tent with his followers and sat down on my bed. It was no use telling him to go away as he would not have gone, and he immediately commenced a long history of how badly he had been treated by Egypt; and when he had finished, I let him know what I knew about him, and that I was the same Englishman that had seen him near Keren, when General Gordon was there as Governor-General.

I then told him my version of his history, and if he had his desserts, he would have been hung up long ago. I knew my man thoroughly; a bully, and combining all the very worst points of one of the very worst Abyssinians that ever lived, and that is saying a great deal. He asked me if I was not frightened of him in olden days; and I told him I had had absolutely no fear of him then, when he threatened to take me prisoner, and I knew that he had still some cut-throats with him, and that I should see that he and his men were properly watched that night, and it was no use coming to my camp at night, as it was guarded. My guardian then came into camp and I sent for him, and I soon had the satisfaction of seeing him driven away, very thankful to have got rid of him; missing, however, my only spare pair of boots, a pair of slippers, some tins of food, and the only bottle of brandy that I had with me. Waldenkel is just the same as he used to be; a strong, heavy old man with now snow-white hair. He stands about six feet three inches, and I should think weighs nearly twenty stone; a perfect giant amongst Abyssinians.

When I first saw him, now years ago, he was sitting on a native bedstead, and used to use a fat tedj girl for a pillow, and those that stood round him as pocket-handkerchiefs. I never considered he was perfectly sane, and in his old age he has grown worse. It is no use being civil to these people, and if one shows the least bit of nervousness or any signs of fear with them, the consequences might not be pleasant; happily they are very rare in Abyssinia at present. They are always cowards, and if they think that you would go for them they always cave in, and they are very frightened of getting a hole in their skin.

We made a good march the next morning, and went past Sabandas and tried to reach Chelunko, but a heavy storm came on to the east, and we had to stop at Mai Kenetal, a small stream that runs in from the east of the big valley. The cook, with his two mules, was about half a mile ahead, and I sent a boy on to bring him back. In the meantime, about three miles to the east a waterspout burst on the mountain side; it looked like a dust whirlwind, so often seen in the hot weather in the Soudan, and in ten minutes a spate came down the small Mai Kenetal, which made crossing impossible. The banks are high, and the water at ordinary times about two feet deep; it had risen in a quarter of an hour to more than twenty feet in height and about thirty yards in breadth, and the rushing torrent was full of mimosa trees which had been torn up by their roots by the waterspout. Our tent was on our side, but the food on the other, so we threw a rope across the stream and had our dinner passed over to us. We had a wild wet night, and the hyenas were very troublesome, as all the wood was so damp that it was with difficulty we could keep fires alight. They succeeded in stampeding the mules, and my riding animal ran into a thick mimosa bush and defended herself against a hyena with her heels, and got slightly bitten before a shot drove the hyena away.

I saw here one of those very rare, nearly black foxes; Schimper, who was with me, had only seen three or four in his life; they are a good deal bigger than the largest English dog fox, and are exactly the same in shape and have a very bushy tail. I thought at first it might be only a case of melanism in a black backed jackal, but this animal is not found at such a high altitude, nor has he the habit of coming so near civilisation, preferring the low country and the subtropical regions. I had a good view of him through my glasses, and his shape is quite different from that of the jackal. I have only handled one skin of this animal, and that was so worm-eaten and incomplete that it was useless buying as a specimen; the fur is nearly black, and the under parts of the belly and under the ears a dark chestnut brown, nearly black.

Next morning, to my disgust, I found there was a transport mule missing, which I did not find out over night, as some of the animals were on one side of the stream and some on the other. On making inquiries I found that it must have been lost at the Werri river, and as we had heard

shots while we were resting there for lunch ; and we found from some merchants, who were camping just ahead of us, that they had fired off their rifles because they had seen three mud-disguised men on the road. Our advance animals were some way in front of us, so no doubt the mule, owing to the carelessness of my Somalis, had entered the bush to graze on the grass and had been taken by these ever watchful thieves, who could easily have led it through the thick scrub into a place of safety ; the mule had only a pack saddle on and a few things belonging to my Somali servants, including their blankets, which they could not replace nearer than Asmara. The merchants also reported that they had lost a donkey which got swept away from the ford into the pool lower down, where it had been taken by a crocodile. Mulazzani's soldiers, on the way up to Abbi-Addi, at the same pool had killed two bull crocodiles that were on dry land fighting, and had taken their skins, neither of them very large, about eight and ten feet respectively ; they were, however, quite big enough to do harm.

The Werri, when we crossed it, was only a little bigger than on our way up, but the fresh flood-marks showed that it had been impassable on many occasions. From Mai Kenetal we marched into Adowa, taking the road between Abba Garima and the group of mountains on which Adowa is situated, a very easy road, and we had no occasion to unload our animals as on our journey to Abbi-Addi. We passed through King Tchlaihaimanout's camp on the Farras-Mai stream, with many bodies still unburied, and the ground strewn with camp litter and broken loot. We found one Wetterli rifle in a good state of preservation, but covered with rust, which I gave to a peasant who gave me shelter in his house while a thunderstorm was going on. I arrived in Adowa at Ledj Mertcha's house, wet through and with a touch of fever, glad to get back to a comfortable dwelling and a waterproof roof, and get some more clothes, as although I had enjoyed my trip immensely, the constant getting wet and the damp had given me a touch of rheumatism, and I had several sharp attacks of malarial fever that would only stop after very large doses of quinine which used to render me nearly deaf.

CHAPTER IX

THE BATTLE OF ADOWA

THOSE of my readers who do not care about battles, and are people of peace, had better not read this chapter, but go on to the next. I published an account of this fight in the month of May 1897 in the *Manchester Guardian*, but a newspaper article is soon forgotten or lost; and the facts regarding the great defeat of the Italians by the Abyssinians will historically prove interesting, as it shows the fighting capabilities of united Abyssinia, and what Italy had to contend against, compared to what England had to undertake in her long and arduous march to Magdala, to fight at last against a small ill-armed force of men, who pluckily left the security of their fortifications and came out in the open on to the Aroge plateau to give battle to a superior armed foe.

The battle of Adowa, commonly designated by the Italians as the battle of Abba Garima, from the mountain of that name, solidified the Abyssinian kingdom, and placed King Menelek firmly on the throne. With the exception of an account published by the Italian War Office in 1896, no details of this fight had ever been made public until my article appeared nearly fifteen months after the battle; and King Menelek, who was in a position to give his version of the story through the French or M. Ilg, his Swiss adviser, has never done so.

The Italian War Office report was drawn up at Massowah, its compiler being General Lamberti, the Governor of that town, who never visited this part of Abyssinia, and published his account from materials which were inadequate and imperfect, and before many of the most essential witnesses had been examined, namely those that were in captivity with King Menelek. Valuable evidence of that day's fight was lost when General Dabormida was killed, as he perhaps alone could have explained his position; and as General Arimondi also lost his life, the only version the public has

been given of the centre of the army and the reserves delaying to take up their positions, is from Generals Baratieri and Ellena, and their explanations must be received with some caution.

As far as my opinion is concerned, I think it tends to throw the entire onus of the defeat on those who had command of the centre. I have spared no pains in collecting every shred of evidence I could from conqueror and vanquished. I rode over the battlefield eight times, and I had in 1884 shot over the greater part of it, so I thoroughly know the country. Before going over the battlefield for the first time, I had had several conversations regarding the fight with Ras Aloula, who had been a sort of chief of the Abyssinian staff, and as he was Governor of the district on which the battle had been fought, and lived in it more or less the whole of his life, his evidence was most valuable. After visiting the battlefield I again had not only conversations with him, but with Ras Mangesha, who headed his army on the day of the fight, and also with Ras Hagos of the Tembien troops, and then after hearing what they had to say, revisited the battlefield on several occasions. Subsequently I had conversations with the king himself regarding the battle, and with his leaders Ras Merconen, Ras Woly, Waag Choum Gangul, who all commanded armies, and with many leading men who had also taken part in it. At Adese-Ababa I met General Albertone on a great many occasions, and talked for hours with him on the subject, and was able to give him information on a good many points he knew nothing about; finally Mr Schimper, who was Abyssinian secretary to the Italian Intelligence Department, was with me at Adese-Ababa, and he could explain to General Albertone all General Baratieri's movements on the 29th February, from the advance towards Adowa from Entiscio until he ran away at Raio the next day after General Albertone's brigade had been surrounded and nearly annihilated, and General Arimondi had been killed and his troops in retreat.

I give a perfectly impartial, and I hope unbiased statement of what actually took place, and I hope from it my military readers will be able to form their own opinion; and what with the experience gained by the British expedition to Magdala, and from the mistakes made by the Italians, that some useful lesson may be learnt; and if ever there is an occasion to again invade Abyssinia, that proper precautions

will be taken against a brave and mobile foe. I know for certain that the Italians would never again be led into such gross tactical errors as they committed on this occasion, and should they again have to cross the frontier the result of the campaign will be very different, in spite of the Abyssinian army being now better armed in every way that it was in 1896.

The following is a list of the troops under General Baratieri that marched from Entiscio on the 29th February for Adowa, its distance being about eighteen miles from the Italian encampment. According to the Italian official statement, General Baratieri had in his command altogether 14,519 rifles with 56 guns. This does not include officers, artillery, camp followers, etc., or the irregular native levies belonging to the provinces of Bogos and Hamasen, who were also armed with rifles.

A. NATIVE BRIGADE (General Albertone).

1st Native Battalion, . .	Rifles 950	
6th „ . . .	„ 850	
7th „ . . .	„ 950	
8th „ . . .	„ 950	
Irregulars, . . .	„ 376	
1st Native Battery, . . .		Cannon 4
2nd Section of the 2nd Mountain Battery,		„ 2
3rd Mountain Battery, . . .		„ 4
4th „ . . .		„ 4
Total (approximate number of rifles)	4076	Cannon 14

B. FIRST INFANTRY BRIGADE (General Arimondi).

1st Regiment (Colonel Stevani)—		
1st Battalion Bersaglieri, .	Rifles 423	
2nd „	„ 350	
2nd Regiment (Colonel Brusati)—		
2nd Infantry Battalion, .	„ 450	
4th „ .	„ 500	
9th „ .	„ 550	
1st Company of the 5th Native Battalion, . . .	„ 220	
8th Mountain Battery, . . .		Cannon 6
11th „ . . .		„ 6
Total (approximate number of rifles)	2493	Cannon 12

C. SECOND INFANTRY BRIGADE (General Dabormida).

3rd Regiment (Colonel Ragin)—		
1st Infantry Battalion, .	Rifles 430	
5th „ .	„ 430	
10th „ .	„ 450	
6th Regiment (Colonel Airaghi)—		
3rd Infantry Battalion, .	„ 430	
13th „ .	„ 450	
14th „ .	„ 450	
Militia Battalion, . .	„ 950	
Native Company of Asmara, .	„ 210	
2nd Artillery Brigade (Colonel Zola)—		
5th Mountain Battery, . .		Cannon 6
6th „ . .		„ 6
7th „ . .		„ 6
Total (approximate number of rifles)	3800	Cannon 18

D. THIRD INFANTRY BRIGADE (General Ellena).

4th Regiment (Colonel Romero)—		
7th Infantry Battalion, .	Rifles 450	
8th „ .	„ 450	
11th „ .	„ 480	
5th Regiment (Colonel Nava)—		
Alpine Battalion, . .	„ 550	
15th Infantry Battalion, .	„ 500	
16th „ .	„ 500	
3rd Native Battalion (Colonel Galliano),	„ 1150	
Brigade of Quick-firing Guns (Colonel de Rosa)—		
1st Quick-firing Battery, . .		Cannon 6
2nd „ . .		„ 6
Half Company of Engineers, . .	70	
Total (approximate number of rifles)	4150	Cannon 12
Grand Total,	Rifles 14,519	Cannon 56

Against this Italian force the Abyssinians could muster at least 120,000 fighting men. It is impossible for the different Abyssinian generals to say exactly how many men took part in the battle, as they were so scattered. The day before, as Sunday the 1st March was a great feast day and there was no prospect of fighting, many of the men had left

camp and gone to spend the night at the villages near the many different churches that are so numerous round the towns of Axum and Adowa, where they intended praying in the early morning and feasting afterwards. There can be no doubt that soon after the battle opened the Abyssinians must have had at least 70,000 rifles on the field, and later on in the day their whole fighting force ; also many of their camp followers took part in the fray, armed with spear, sword and shield, or any other weapon they could get hold of.

The fighting men were drawn from all parts of Abyssinia, and the following list gives the names of the kings, princes, and chiefs of Abyssinia who marched north to drive back the invaders of their country.

1. Army of King Menelek and Queen Taitou—Shoans and South and South-Western Gallas.
2. Ras Merconen, the nephew of King Menelek—Shoan and Harar troops.
3. Ras Woly, King Menelek's brother-in-law—Yejju contingent Amharans and Gallas.
4. Ras Michael, adopted son of the late King Johannes, with the Wollo Galla army.
5. Ras Mangesha, illegitimate son of the late King Johannes, with the Tigréan troops.
6. The Waag Choum Gangul, with the Amharic troops of Waag and Lasta.
7. Ras Aloula, with the Tigréan troops of the northern frontier.
8. King Tchlaihaimanout, with the Godjam troops.
9. Ras Sebat and Hagos Taferi, with the Agamé troops.

The two latter leaders had been in the pay of the Italians up till the time when the battle of Amba Alagi was fought, and on Ras Merconen's advance further north they joined him with all their troops, armed with modern rifles, and large supplies of ammunition that had been given them by the Italian Government. There is an old saying in Tigré, that "nothing ever good came out of Agamé," and both Ras Sebat and Hagos Taferi are two intriguing scoundrels, and like the famous Ras Waldenkel, ready to sell their own friends or country to the highest bidder. The Agamé peasantry are a most warlike race, and are noted as very good shots with the gun. Before firearms were introduced, they were equally noted for throwing the spear and shooting with the bow and arrow.

I have put on the accompanying map, which is taken from one issued by the Italian Government to their officers for the campaign, the positions occupied by the different Abyssinian camps the morning of the battle, where the Italian army was encamped on the 29th February, and the three places they reached before daylight on the morning of the 1st March.

At the first glance at the plan it can be seen how well the Abyssinian position was chosen. Their right, No. 1 and No. 2, which was under King Tchlaihaimanout, was encamped on a high irregular plateau, with its southern flank protected by nearly perpendicular cliffs, up which there are a few sheep paths, impossible nearly for European troops to scale. In the open ground at the foot of the cliffs, amongst water meadows, were encamped the Godjam cavalry. Adjoining King Tchlaihaimanout's army was that of Ras Merconen No. 3, who occupied Adowa and the heights above. The advance on these two camps would have to be up hill, the slope being gradual, with little cover for sheltering the attacking force, while the defenders would be sheltered by rocky ground, and the houses and enclosures round Adowa. The next encampment, No. 4, was that of Ras Michael with his Wollo Gallas; many of them were mounted on hardy country horses, and served as mounted infantry. He was stationed about the centre of the position on the southern and south-western slopes of Mount Selado; joining him on the northern and north-western slopes was Ras Mangesha, No. 5, and on the extreme left of the Abyssinian position was Ras Aloula, No. 6, who occupied the heights round Adi-Aboona. King Menelek and Queen Taitou were encamped at Fremona, No. 7, near the ruins of the old Portuguese Jesuit monastery; their position was also a good one, as the heights round Fremona gradually slope up from the valley that divides it from Mount Selado, and are crowned with broken rocky ground, offering great facilities for defence, and a stubborn resistance could also be made at the small river that runs down the valley, as in many places it has nearly perpendicular banks. The king's troops were also able to support Ras Aloula's, Ras Merconen's and Ras Michael's positions. Ras Woly was encamped at No. 8 in the low ground to the south-east of Fremona spur, immediately behind Ras Merconen's position, whom he could reinforce in less than half an hour, and the Waag Choum Gangul, No. 9, was equally close to Ras Merconen and to King Tchlaihaimanout.

Positions No. 8 and No. 9 were on the south-west and north-west slopes of Adowa, and were perfectly sheltered from any direct artillery or rifle fire; so troops from there, by making use of the bed of the river, could come into action without any loss at any point, commencing at No. 2 till No. 5 —Dedjatchmatch Besheer's command of part of the troops belonging to King Menelek's army was in reserve in another sheltered position, No. 10, further in rear of the positions Nos. 8 and 9, and he also could reinforce position No. 7 where the king was encamped, without coming under fire. The Galla cavalry were stationed in the water meadows, at No. 11 about eight miles off. Their position should not be shown on the plan, as it does not take it in, but they were so placed that they could be used on either flank. The reason they were kept so far away was that sufficient good grass and water was not to be obtained any nearer.

To thoroughly reconnoitre and search out the Abyssinian position was impossible, as the whole of it was not to be seen from any given point even, and, if the Italian staff had gone forward in several places, they would only have seen small portions of camps 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. I have every reason to know also that their Intelligence Department was altogether at fault regarding the actual number of the Abyssinian soldiers present, and they did not give them credit for having the number of rifles, or the quantity of ammunition they possessed, although they ought to have known that, without the recent purchases of arms and machine guns from the French, that Abyssinia possessed fairly good breech-loading rifles of an amount that was considerably in excess of six figures, and it seems to me incredible that the Italians, who had already had their mountain guns put out of action at Macalle by Ras Merconen's Hotchkiss quick-firers, should again oppose the Abyssinians with the same artillery. They certainly had two quick-firing batteries with them, but they were kept in reserve, and not put in the fighting line, and the battle was all over before they were made use of.

The only troops belonging to the Abyssinians that were armed with the same rifles as the Italians were those of Ras Sebat and Hagos Taferi; these leaders were with the troops of Ras Aloula and Ras Mangesha. The other troops were armed with every description of rifle, from the old Snider, still in a good state of preservation, and a most favourite weapon with them (owing to its killing powers), to the last modern weapons. Among the rifles were the old and new

pattern Remington, Martini-Henry, Gras, Berdan, Mauser, Lebel, Wetterli, etc. With all these weapons the Abyssinians make good practice up to about four hundred to six hundred yards, and at a short distance they are as good shots as any men in Africa, the Transvaal Boers not excepted, as they never throw a cartridge away if they can help it, and never shoot in a hurry. They know nothing whatever about fire discipline nor any European drill, their one object being when an enemy is in their country, to attack him at the most favourable moment to themselves as possible. When the word of command is given to advance, they can tell from the position they are in what their duties are, and they know the general plan of battle, namely, to surround their enemy as quickly as possible, and when the circle is complete, to make use of every possible bit of cover on their advance to the centre where their enemy is situated. When they arrive well within musket range, they commence firing, not before, and as their invaders have always fought in close formation, the target offered has been a large one. The Abyssinian with his light load and unbooted foot can move with ease at a sort of jog-trot, at a ratio of at least four to one as compared to the European, and as he need never fight an engagement unless he wishes, and as a rule can fight at the time he chooses, and not when his enemy would like him to, he always has an immense advantage.

The battle of Adowa was a good example of this: the Abyssinian had a splendid position to defend, which he left because his enemy had given him an opportunity, which perhaps would never occur again, and enabled him to approach the Italian position from all sides overground, that offered great protection to the attacking force, there being little open ground. The Abyssinian leaders could tell how many rifles they could concentrate and put into position against the numbers that were likely to be against them in any part of the field, and they acted accordingly, and threw within a couple of hours a force of nearly eight to one against their enemy's advance guard, which was General Albertone with the Italian left wing. No matter how good European infantry are, there is no standing against such odds in a thick and broken country. Eight decent shots like the Abyssinians are more than a match for one good marksman. They also knew that if they could not make good their attack, that they could retire in comparative safety to their own strong position without encountering any particularly open bit of

ground, where they might have suffered from the Italian artillery or volley fire, and that the nature of the new ground they were taking up for the attack, did not allow of them being outflanked as the Italian centre, right and reserves, were too far off. Any front attack at Adowa was also entirely in their favour, as it was all open ground, and again it was not possible for them to be outflanked, as the Italian force was too small and too slow to carry out the manœuvre.

The Abyssinian artillery was, as far as guns went, superior to the Italians, but not so numerous, and the two quick-firing batteries of the Italians, which might have equalised matters, never had a chance of getting properly into action, and was in the wrong part of the field.

By eleven o'clock on Saturday night the Italian army composed as before enumerated was on the march to Adowa, and a further force of 2785 men were left to guard the camp and stores at Entiscio. No answer from King Menelek had been received by General Baratieri to his last letter written a few hours before he started, asking that negotiations might continue, and a sort of an armistice might be said to have existed. The Abyssinians never expected to be attacked, and the Italian advance would have been a complete surprise, had it not been for Ras Aloula, who never believed the Italian officials, and would never trust them. Two of his spies watched the Italians leave Entiscio, and arrived by a circuitous route, and informed Ras Aloula who was about a mile to the north of Adi-Aboona, that the enemy was on the march to Adowa. The Ras immediately informed King Menelek and the other leaders, and the Abyssinians prepared for battle, sending out strong scouting parties in all directions in front of their positions towards Entiscio. No look-outs on the further ridges had been placed, on account of the negotiations that were being carried on. Before daylight it was found that the advance guard, or more properly speaking the left wing of the Italian army, was already close, and getting into position on the western slopes of the hills *vis-à-vis* to Mount Abba Garima.

In order to reach Adowa the Italians advancing from Entiscio had a distance of about eighteen miles to traverse. The road from Entiscio, after crossing a pass which is marked on the plan, proceeds through the valley of the Farasmai (described on the plan as the Mai Cherbara) and over the Gandafta Pass (between the Gandafta and Cheiras

mountains) to Mount Raio. Near Mount Raio three roads meet. The northern road runs by the Assam Selado stream (called on the Italian map the Mariam Sciaitu) to Adi-Aboona (called in the map Adi-Abrum), where it is joined by a brook that comes from Gesherworka; the open land between Adi-Aboona and the Gasgorie pass. The southern road runs down a narrow valley, then ascends the spur of Mount Semaiata and comes out opposite Mount Aba Garima into more open ground at the head of a small valley, that drains again southward into the Farasmai. The central road runs through the Memsah valley, through which runs the Assam brook; then rises over the southern spur of Mount Selado (the name being spelt Scelloda by the Italians), and then falls into the open fertile valley facing Adowa to the north and north-east, and follows again the Assam brook till it reaches the market green at Adowa. The brook cannot be followed the whole way from Memsah valley, as it runs through a deep gorge dividing the Selado group from that of Abou Garima. All three of these routes present great difficulties for an invading force, being commanded by the hills on either side and offering but little space in which troops can be deployed, except in the immediate vicinity of the town of Adowa.

For an attack on Adowa, Entiscio is quite the wrong base; the town can be approached through comparatively open country either from the west or south-west, and an army approaching from Adigrat should have left Entiscio many miles to the north and swung round to the south of the town down the Legumte valley and attacked from the south-west. The whole of the Farasmai valley is open country, grass in the lower part, and cultivation on the slopes; there is only one fairly open spur to cross, and then there is open ground right up to the environs of Adowa. When the three roads were reached at Raio the Italian army divided. General Albertone, with the native Brigade A, numbering about 4000 rifles, took the southern road. General Dabormida, with Brigade C, consisting of a force of 3800 rifles, about two-thirds of the number being Europeans, took the northern road. General Arimondi, with Brigade B, numbering 2500 rifles, ought to have advanced by the central road; and General Ellena, with Brigade D, numbering 4150 rifles, remained behind at Raio. General Baratieri, with his staff, should have been with General Arimondi and followed by the reserve under General Ellena.

The orders that General Albertone received were carried out; he got into position on the Semaiata ridge before daylight, opposite to Mount Abba Garima, and if the centre had been in its place it would have been in touch with him in the Memsah valley above which the Semaiata range runs. General Dabormida made his advance in time, and there is no doubt the object of his force was to outflank if possible the Abyssinian left wing, and sweep round Mount Selado on the north, and make use of the fairly open ground that the Adi-Aboona-Adowa valley offers from this direction. No one can explain General Baratieri's inexplicable delay in not taking up this central position and keeping General Arimondi's troops from advancing, and also not placing General Ellena's reserves in a position where they could easily reinforce either flanks or centre. The centre and reserve had arrived at Raio before daylight and they had a less distance to cover than either of the wings.

The battle commenced at six o'clock in the morning with an attack on General Albertone's position, his troops occupying a ridge on the Semaiata mountains; his left flank being in fairly thick bush, his centre on open ground with isolated patches of bush, and his right on partly open and partly broken ground. The Abyssinian development took some time to accomplish, and while it was being carried out, General Albertone sent back to General Baratieri for reinforcements, as he could see nothing of General Arimondi's troops that ought to have been in sight on his right soon after daylight; he had before this already informed the Commander-in-chief by a messenger that he had taken up his position before daylight. He was attacked by the troops of King Tchlaihaimanout on his left flank, by the king's troops in the centre, and by those of Ras Michael and Ras Mangesha on his right. The King and Queen Taitou were stationed at the old church at Edda-Abba Garima (the house of Father Garima, one of the famous old monks of Abyssinian history) well out of harm's way, where a good view of the whole country up to the group of Selado is obtainable.

In the early part of the fight some Abyssinian irregulars in Italian pay had arrived, and took up their position on a somewhat lower position on Albertone's right flank at the top end of the valley that divides Abba Garima from Semaiata. The irregulars, as might be expected, were the first to give way in face of the vastly superior numbers

brought against them. The position they had occupied behind trees and rocks I found strewn with empty cartridge cases; the trees riddled with bullets, and the rocks covered with bullet plashes, bore witness to the tremendous fire by which they had been assailed. The bodies of those who were killed at this position remained unburied, one of them with his back to the rock, still holding a cartridge between his teeth. The irregulars retired on Mount Raio and General Arimondi's position, which was a little over a mile in front of General Ellena with the reserves, and about four to five miles behind the position that ought to have been taken up to support Albertone's right, and to fill in the unoccupied ground in the Memsah valley.

The battle was at first an artillery duel, the Italians doing great havoc with their mountain guns on the dense masses of Abyssinians before they deployed in skirmishing order to the attack. The Abyssinian quick-firing Hotchkiss guns soon arrived and took up a position on one of the lower slopes of Garima, from which point they were enabled to pour a plunging fire on the Italians. The moment they were brought into action they soon silenced Albertone's artillery, which was now short of ammunition, gun after gun becoming useless in succession, either by the death of the gunners or for want of more material to load them with. The enemy had now nearly encircled Albertone's position; the front attack had crossed the open ground where they suffered severely, and had entered bush and broken ground that led up to the ridge. Both his flanks had been turned, and the enemy's sharpshooters had mounted to the heights above his rear and were firing down on his soldiers. At last the final rush was made and further resistance would have been madness, and could only have resulted in a butchery of the survivors and the wounded; so there was nothing left to do but surrender, and save what few men that there were left alive. Thus at eleven o'clock, after expending all their artillery and nearly all their small-arm ammunition, and fighting for nearly five hours, the remnants of the left wing of the Italian force surrendered to the Abyssinian king. The Abyssinian troops in this part of the field were now at liberty to be employed helping their compatriots against the Brigades of Arimondi and Ellena at Raio. The Abyssinian leaders could see long before General Albertone had to surrender how the battle would end in that part of the field, and nearly the whole of Ras Merconen's, Ras Mangesha's,

Ras Woly's, and the Waag Choum Gangul's forces faced about and advanced to attack the Italian centre in the direction of Raio.

Ras Michael's troops went to reinforce Ras Aloula, who had already got into touch with General Dabormida and disputed his advance with a flanking fire. The firing that took place in the early morning was heard not only by the Italian centre, but in all the neighbourhood, and also seventeen miles away to the westward; at Axum the boom of the cannon re-echoing from hill to hill was a signal to all the fighting men who were looking forward to keeping their feast at the sacred city to return to Adowa. Between nine and ten o'clock the full Abyssinian force was on the field of battle and the Galla cavalry had also arrived before General Albertone's position, and had been sent off to the left of the Abyssinian force to help to strengthen it.

The position of Arimondi and Ellena was critical from the very commencement; hours after the sound of the fighting had commenced they remained nearly stationary in the cramped position round Raio and Chidane Meret. The first news, it is said, that they received from the front, was brought by some of the irregulars who had been engaged on Albertone's right front and then more by some of the left wing that had been stationed in reserve a little to the rear of Albertone's right front. A simultaneous attack commenced by an overwhelming force of Abyssinians on the front and flanks of Arimondi's brigade, and being in close formation they offered an easy mark to the Abyssinians, who now commenced swarming like locusts over the high ground and trying to get round over the high land to close the Memsah pass and cut off the retreat to Entiscio, Adigrat and Oculu-Cussei. General Arimondi, with his brave Italian brigade, tried all he could to prevent the Abyssinians from making their onward advance, but he was shortly outnumbered and had to retire fighting every yard of ground. He fell at the head of his troops. General Baratieri by eleven o'clock had left General Ellena's forces and retired; he had seen the very large force of Abyssinians surely surrounding General Arimondi, and he knew what would also occur to General Ellena, so he made off, and it was not till several miles after Raio had been left behind that his flag was hoisted for the first time during the day, and then only to collect stragglers to cover the retreat.

In the midst of this general disaster, or whatever one

could call it, as there was now no semblance of real order left, there were many instances of individual gallantry. At many points on the line of retreat officers and men turned and attempted to hold the road, freely sacrificing themselves with splendid courage in the attempt to cover the retreat of their comrades. On these human barriers the Abyssinians came down like the spates in their own mountain rivers, sweeping all before them. The resistance of these isolated bands was heroic, but it was utterly vain trying to stop those that were panic-stricken, mingled up as the different native and European regiments were, without officers, who had mostly been the first to be slain. The Abyssinian always, if possible, shoots down the officers or leaders in his own fights, knowing that men without a leader are more easily defeated than those with them; and as these fights are caused by the leaders, the sooner they are done away with the sooner the quarrel will end.

Had General Ellena made use of his batteries of quick-firers on each side of the Memsah pass and sacrificed them there, he might greatly have checked the onward advance of the enemy; but bringing them through the pass only helped to block the road and hindered the line of retreat, and on the other side they had to be abandoned, having been little used and doing hardly any execution. On getting over the pass the Italians lost all formation, and the army melted away in a fan-shaped formation extending in a half circle from the Adigrat to the Hausen road, followed by the Abyssinians who chased the fugitives to Entiscio camp, which also fell into their hands. The survivors from the Italian centre were then attacked by the Agamé population and many cruel massacres took place, the bodies of the slain being mutilated and their heads cut off and put on the rocks that lined the sides of the road.

Gallant General Dabormida had fought his way along the road to nearly Adi-Aboona before he was outnumbered and had to retire. Ras Aloula had to watch the Gasgorie pass, along which a force of Italian irregulars was expected from Adi-Quala, besides trying to check Dabormida's advance; later in the day he was joined by Ras Michael's Gallas and then by the king's Galla cavalry, who lost heavily in charging Dabormida's square formation. It was only when Ras Mangesha's troops and some belonging to Ras Merconen, led by Ras Mangesha, made their appear-

ance round the eastern side of Mount Selado and joined with Ras Aloula and Ras Michael that General Dabormida's force was outshot and outnumbered by about five to one. He fell towards the close of the day, losing the majority of his troops; those that were not taken prisoners made their escape to the Hausen road and to Adi-Quala.

So ended the day's fight, which was spread over a very large area of country, all favouring the tactics of the defenders of their country and ending so disastrously for Italy. Nearly half of her troops were never in proper battle array, and the three hours' halt of General Arimondi and the nearly four hours' halt of the reserves with General Ellena and General Baratieri will always be to me the principal cause of the disaster. I rode over the ground so many times and I know the country so well that I have a right to speak on the subject, and I have no hesitation in saying that the Italians owed the magnitude of their defeat entirely to the fault of General Baratieri. No one has any right to question the personal valour of the Italian officer and soldier as the French press did, and on the 1st March 1896 many heroes met their death, and also, I am glad to say, many survived. Those that were in the centre never had a chance like the right and left wings to show what they could do, and circumstances over which they had no control led to a panic; and no one knows better than our English officers what it would be if they were placed in a similar position with English and native regiments jammed together in a confined valley with only one small outlet, no room to deploy, and surrounded on the same level and above by a well-armed and brave enemy, outnumbering them at least six to one. Had that struggling and seething mass been in line formation and in the position they ought to have occupied some four or five miles in advance they would have done much better, and the day might have ended in their retaining part of their position; but the odds were always too heavy against them, being at least seven rifles to one, sometimes more and sometimes less, according to how the enemy was concentrated.

The enemy had still a large reserve of ammunition at the end of the day, about 3,000,000 rounds, while it is a great question whether the Italians had enough cartridges to last them for many more hours, and certainly not enough to have enabled them to fight another big battle the next day.

Had the Italians gained the position, which they might have done if the centre and reserves had not halted, their line at six o'clock in the morning would have extended from Abba Garima mountain across the spur that connects this mountain to the out-jutting south-south-east spur from the Selado mountain, and they would have had about 6500 regular troops in line with rifles, with twenty-six cannon, to defend a front of about 3500 yards. Besides the regulars they had about 2000 rifles of the native irregulars for crowning the higher ground on Selado on which European troops cannot manœuvre, and they would have had 4150 rifles belonging to the regulars and twelve quick-firing cannon in reserve, to strengthen any part of this line. General Dabormida would have swung round the lower slope of Selado from the north and joined with the right of the centre when they advanced on to Adowa. The Italians would then have offered battle on a ground which favoured them, and the Abyssinians would have had to attack in the open and must have lost very heavily before coming to close quarters, both from artillery and rifle fire, especially if the quick-firing artillery of the reserve had been brought into the first fighting line. The Abyssinians only employed the quick-firers, and did not make much use of their old Krupp and mountain guns that they had taken in their former fights against the Egyptians.

The disaster was a terrible one, but it might easily have been greater. Early in the day, about ten o'clock, when the battle was practically decided, Ras Aloula sent to the king and asked for his Galla cavalry to send forward and cut off the retreat of the enemy. Owing to the horse disease having killed all the animals in Tigré, Ras Aloula had only about ten animals left, and on Holy Cross day in September, six months and a half after the battle, Ras Mangesha could only muster about three hundred cavalry. At the fight he had only about eighty present, so he had no force at his disposal that could carry out this manœuvre. Had Ras Aloula been allowed to use the king's cavalry for the purpose of closing the passes on the line of retreat, which might easily have been accomplished, the whole Italian army might have been compelled to capitulate. By the afternoon the noise of the battle had died far away out of earshot of the Abyssinian encampment at Adowa, yet still the pursuit continued, as the demoralised details of the Italian army fled for safety along the various roads. As the survivors arrived

across the Italian frontier, the panic spread throughout Erithrea; the Italian agricultural colonists established on the Hamasen plateau fled to Asmara, and from there to Massowah, and the civilian population, European and native, of Asmara, Keren, and the surrounding villages, all flocked to the fortified zone on the sea coast for protection.

The remnants of the army found their way to the fortresses of Adi-Ugri near Goodofelasie, Asmara, Adi-Caia, at the top of the Hadas pass (between Adi-Caia and Massowah), which was speedily fortified. The only thing that prevented King Menelek following up his complete victory was want of provisions to feed his army and more numerous camp-followers; but had Ras Aloula been allowed to advance with his army, strengthened by part of Ras Mangesha's force, there is no doubt that the whole of the Hamasen plateau and the Bogos province, with the exception of the fortified positions of Adi-Ugri, Asmara and Keren, would have again fallen into the hands of the Abyssinians, as they might have lived by plunder, and the garrisons of these places were not numerous enough to take the offensive in the open, and it would only have been a question of time how long their provisions held out before they would have to capitulate, as it was hardly possible for reinforcements to have arrived from Italy in time to relieve them.

The Italian force, immediately after the battle, was a great deal too demoralised to offer any effective resistance, and it was only the immediate despatch of reinforcements from Italy that prevented the Kassala garrison being withdrawn, and that place being again occupied by the Dervishes.

The day after the battle King Menelek could calculate the cost of his victory and what he had gained by it. He had utterly defeated his enemy and taken about 4000 prisoners, Italian and native in about equal numbers; among the Italians were many officers and one General. The whole of the Italian artillery, some sixty-five cannon, about 11,000 rifles (nearly all the Italians had thrown their arms away in the flight), all the commissariat and transport that was on the field, besides that which was left behind at Entiscio. Against this he had to estimate a loss of between 5000 to 6000 killed, and about 8000 badly wounded, of whom perhaps a quarter died. The slightly wounded are not reckoned, only those that were actually disabled. Adowa, Axum, Macalle and Abbi-Addi, and many of the neighbouring villages were full of wounded when I visited them some months after the

battle; nearly all of these would be cripples for life, the bones of the arms and legs being shattered.

Amongst the Abyssinian slain were Kenezmatch (General of the right wing) Abeina and Kenezmatch Tafessa, killed by General Arimondi's brigade; Dedjatchmatch (Duke) Machacha and Fituaris (commander of the advance guard) Gabeyo, Hailou and Tadai. Dedjatchmatch Besheer, King Menelek's cousin, was very badly wounded.

The few days after the battle were spent in collecting the plunder and dividing the Italian prisoners among the different leaders, who were to be held responsible to the king for their safe keeping. The Italian native prisoners, soldiers in the Italian service who had fought against the Abyssinians, were tried by a council of war consisting of all the chief Abyssinian leaders, and the horrible sentence of mutilation was passed; which Menelek sanctioned, after, it is said, great pressure had been brought to bear upon him, he being greatly against any harsh measures being used. The sentence of mutilation —that is, the cutting off the right hand and left foot—is the customary punishment for the offences of theft, sacrilege and treason, of which many of these men were judged to be clearly guilty. Those soldiers who had served at the defence of Macalle had been warned of what punishment they would receive if they were again found in arms against Abyssinia. An Italian officer of high rank, who had given his parole at Macalle, was taken prisoner during the fight and was immediately shot. The punishment of the native Abyssinians, according to the laws of the country, was perfectly just, but the horrible part was that the offence of the majority of the prisoners was their first, and no distinction was made between Moslem and Christian. There are many Moslem soldiers in Italian employ who have never been Abyssinian subjects, and the harsh way in which they were treated has made the whole Mahomedan population of the north lasting enemies to King Menelek and to the Abyssinian Christians of the south, and no doubt in the future they will have their revenge.

The sentence was carried out in the different camps, but nearly eight hundred of them were operated on at the same place, on the slope from Fremona down to the Assam Selado river, and the severed hands and feet put in a pile. I saw it when I visited Adowa, a rotting heap of ghastly remnants. The joint of wrist and ankle are articulated and the stumps plunged into boiling fat to stop the hæmorrhage; the wound

then heals over, and afterwards a piece of the stump of the bone that is destroyed by the contact with the boiling fat comes away. I saw hundreds of these poor people who had survived the operation, and I was enabled, after crossing the Italian frontier, to send several of them back to their homes in the Hamasen. The neighbourhood of Adowa was full of their freshly dead bodies; they had generally crawled to the banks of the streams to quench their burning thirst, where many of them lingered unattended and exposed to the elements until death put an end to their sufferings. At some places the bodies were close together, as if they had sought comfort in one another's society, and the missing members plainly told to whom the bodies belonged. In Captain De Martino's house, that used to be the Italian Residency, there must have been some thirty bodies of these wretched people; three at the well in the garden, where they died, evidently trying to procure water, and in the small summerhouse there were seven, six belonging to natives and one to an Italian, and what a horrible death the last of them must have suffered, surrounded by their dead companions.

The same day that the sentence was carried out, the king's cousin, Dedjatchmatch Besheer, died of his wounds; and the moment his Shoan soldiers heard of his death, they massacred in cold blood all the prisoners, Italians and natives, that had been handed over to them by their master to take to Shoa. The number killed was about three hundred, among them being forty Italians; these poor people were simply butchered, cut down, speared or shot, and left in a heap in what had been a zareeba. I had to pass it on several occasions during my residence at Adowa, and, needless to say, as quickly as possible. Nearly all the Italian dead and some of the wounded also were mutilated, mostly by the southern Abyssinians. It is a custom that has existed for centuries and they justify it by the bible; saying that David, the father of Solomon, proved his valour to King Saul in the same manner, and that their king is a descendant of King Solomon. A southern Abyssinian or Yejju maiden may still be won by such specimens of valour, but the custom now is not so much in vogue in northern Abyssinia.

The food supplies taken from the Italians enabled King Menelek to remain a few days longer in Adowa; most of his soldiers, however, were hard pressed for food and many of them were sent off south at once, and on their way to levy tribute from the Azebu and other Gallas on the eastern slopes

of the country. This was the signal for all these people to rise and defend their property, and the king's troops lost heavily when making their raids ; these Gallas then retaliated, and King Menelek, when he got past Amba-Alagi, was constantly attacked, and several engagements were fought with various results, and many men were killed on each side.* The Abyssinian army left by the two great southern roads ; the ones that took the western one were not molested, and, marching through a richer country, did not suffer ; those that took the eastern road returned home in nearly a starving state.

To return to what immediately preceded the battle of Adowa. The Italians held the line of country between Adigrat, Entiscio and Adi-Quala, where they could have waited and acted on the defensive, and no doubt in their fortified position would have been enabled to defeat any attacks made on them by the whole combined Abyssinian army. Negotiations for peace were being carried on up to the eve of the battle. Then the now celebrated message from the Italian Prime Minister, Signor Crispi, to General Baratieri arrived complaining that the campaign was no better than a "military phthisis," and urging more energetic measures. It is hard to say what an English General would have done under the circumstances, but I doubt whether he would have acted the same as General Baratieri did, even if he had received fifty telegrams from a Prime Minister, namely, to leave a place of safety and advance against an enemy whose strength he did not exactly know, but was certain, according to his own Intelligence Department, that outnumbered him at least four to one.

I was informed by an Italian officer of the Intelligence Department that it had been reported to them that the Abyssinians were short of ammunition, whereas it turned out they had plenty, and their reserve of three million rounds was never touched. The action of General Baratieri also in attacking King Menelek while negotiations were going on was hardly what an English General would do.

Of course General Baratieri thought his attack would have

* Since writing this, Ras Mangesha has ceased to be the ruler of Tigre owing to his conduct not being satisfactory to King Menelek. Ras Merconen has been made Governor and left Harar. Edda Mœni has been chosen as head-quarters ; this is a strategical point, and prevents the Azebu, Gallas, and Danakils raiding. The country round Edda Mœni is very fertile and has a good climate. It is ten miles south-east of Amba Alagi and eight miles east of the English camp of Atsala on the Magdala road.

been a complete surprise, and as Signor Crispi, the Prime Minister, wanted to meet his Parliament (which was discontented with the policy in Erithrea) with a victory, no reward for General Baratieri would have been too great had he succeeded, and like a gamester he threw his dice for a big coup and lost. A wait of five days in his secure position would have served Italy just as well, as the Abyssinians would have been forced to retire from the north owing to want of food; and however clever the Abyssinian leaders are in getting a large army together and handling them, they have not as yet learnt the secret of feeding them, and until they do they are never likely in the long run to prove a match for civilised commanders with a well-organised and sufficient commissariat acting on the defensive.

The Abyssinian hordes are the same as the locust, they live on what they can get from the surrounding country; when they have devoured everything, they have to move on to another place where supplies are procurable. At the outside an Abyssinian, who is not one of the regular soldiers, can keep the field for a couple of months, and then he has to take one transport animal with him, with a boy or girl, generally the latter, to look after his riding animal and to cook his food. His rations will consist of dried meat, flour and red pepper, and at 3 lbs. weight of food per diem, gives 180 lbs. for two months; what with his kit besides, this is as much as he and his animals can carry between them.

The regular troops are the same; they have to bring supplies with them, which they get from their leaders before they set out on the campaign; after these are finished, unless fresh supplies come forward, they have to live on the country; and now the peasantry are so well armed, looting is not such an easy matter as it used to be, as the peasants combine and do not hesitate to use their firearms. When an Abyssinian army is on the march, the camp followers and servants as a rule are more numerous than the fighting men, and very often number more than the double. The soldier does very little work except fighting and plundering, and no leader in Abyssinia dare try to put his men under severe discipline and make them forego their camp followers and women. King Johannes tried to do so before he became King of Kings but did not succeed.

Kirkham, who was a sergeant in the army and served with the late General Gordon in China, and was with the Abyssinian expedition, was lent by Lord Napier to King

Johannes. He drilled the Abyssinians in European fashion, but they would not do what he required them to, and insisted on taking the field in their own way. They learnt to fire volleys and concentrate their fire, which proved useful in many of King Johannes' fights before he won the throne. He also had about three hundred black soldiers under Kirkham, most of them had escaped into Abyssinia from the Soudan and these proved good soldiers, and used to defeat ten times their number with very little loss, but they were armed with Sniders and Enfields against men mostly armed with spear and shield and a certain number of old-fashioned smooth-bores.

The Abyssinians used to look upon Kirkham's drill lessons as a huge joke, and the drill ground used to be crammed with men and children looking on and passing uncomplimentary remarks and imitating those that were being instructed. The late Colonel Burnaby used to try and drill the scouts that I raised for the late Baker Pasha in 1883, and gave it up as a bad job as he could not improve on their manner of fighting.

The real cause of the Italian defeat was, that General Baratieri was tied to the telegraph station and sacrificed his military duty, and most likely his better judgment for what might be called an electioneering cry to please his superiors in Italy, and foolishly obeyed what they telegraphed him. He must have known at the time that unless he could make a complete surprise he was risking the lives of the troops under his command, and sending the last letter to King Menelek on the eve of the battle was evidently intended to make him think that no advance would be made, so that his surprise attack would have more chance of success. It is what we should call very bad form and perhaps by a much harsher word. Here is an instance of the presence of the telegraph causing a disaster, and whatever may be its benefits it has also its drawbacks, and I am not an advocate for fighting battles that are carried on in uncivilised parts from civilised centres thousands of miles away. The general that is in command and directs the movement of an army as a rule, but not always, has won his post by his own capabilities and can thoroughly be trusted to do his best, so it is very unwise to hamper him with instructions or to try and make him fight a battle prematurely for political purposes. The time will most likely come when the truth will be known who it was that induced General Baratieri to act in the way he did; it did not come out at his trial at Asmara, at which I was present, and it was impossible to come to any decision on

the subject in Erithrea at that period, nor was it possible to get any true version of the details of the fight which could only be studied on the spot, and this was one of the reasons that induced me to risk going across the frontier, and finding out what the chief actors on the Abyssinian side had to say on the subject.

I think that all the Abyssinian leaders were unanimous in the opinion that the Italians would have been perfectly safe had they remained at their position round Entiscio, and the next position where a battle could have been fought with some chance of success was the one that I pointed out before, which could only be taken up by a surprise. The Italian right and left wings carried out their part of the manœuvre, but the centre and reserve, although they had plenty of time, failed to come on, and they were all caught at a disadvantage, because they were unable to support each other, and allowed the Abyssinian leaders to deal with them in detail.

In Italy General Albertone has too often been made the scape-goat for the whole disaster. It has been charged against him that he was too far in advance, but this is not the opinion of the Abyssinian leaders, as they say he formed up in line of battle at the only place possible, and held out much longer than any of the other generals. He could not retire on Arimondi or the reserves under Ellena, because the Abyssinians seeing the centre was not in its place blocked the road, and had he broken through, would have only added to the confusion that already existed in that part of the field, and entirely filled up the very limited area they had at their disposal; the trap would only have been fuller, and the massacre would have still if possible been worse. If General Dabormida had retired, which he might have done earlier in the day, the Italian line of retreat would have been more congested, and the loss would have been greater.

The opinion of Ras Aloula and many of the Abyssinian generals was that it made very little difference what took place the moment the Italians made their fatal advance, and if they had made the surprise complete and lined the position, they would still have been beaten and crushed, as they were so outnumbered, and it was quite possible if they had required to do so with the rapid movement of their men, to concentrate fifteen rifles to one on any part of the position, and the Italians could not in their formation. reinforce the different points quick enough, nor had they the chance with the force at

their disposal to storm at any time with success the heights on which the camps were situated. I perfectly agree with their opinion, and the loss to both sides would then have been too terrible to contemplate, and the fate of the wounded most awful.

The Abyssinians acknowledge that they won the victory very cheaply, and if Arimondi and Ellena had arrived at the place where they ought to have been, that they would have suffered a terrible loss. From their spies they knew all about the Italian force and its movements, whereas the Italians knew but little of their enemy's, and General Baratieri had a very bad name at Adowa, owing to the cruelties that took place when he first occupied the town of Adowa, and no one was likely to volunteer him any valuable information, and here was an example of the Intelligence Department listening to pleasant information and believing in it, and not taking every precaution to get proper and trustworthy news. I know for a fact that when the truth was told them by one person who ought certainly to have been listened to, as his general veracity on the resources of the country was well known, he was ignored and they actually started on their march, believing that they were going to meet a force of 70,000 rifles, which they had every reason to believe would be scattered over a large area extending to Axum, and with a scarcity of ammunition, instead of one of 120,000 rifles with plenty of cartridges with the soldiers and a very large reserve.

I never heard from the Abyssinians, from the leading men down to the private soldier, one word of disparagement offered against the Italians under Generals Albertone, Arimondi and Dabormida; on the contrary they were all loud in their praise in fighting so bravely against such overwhelming odds. They said that Albertone only surrendered after his artillerymen had shot away all their ammunition, and nearly everyone of his battery mules was killed, this I can confirm as I saw their bodies still unburied behind the ridge that the guns occupied, and nearly all the infantry had hardly a cartridge left for their rifles; he had also lost the majority of his officers either killed or wounded, they being the first marked out by the Abyssinians, and fire concentrated on them at once. Arimondi was killed at the head of his brave Italian troops, doing all he could to cover the retreat, and the fate of Dabormida was tragic. He was in the thick of the fighting during the retreat of his force, and I met at

Adese Ababa the man who shot him. At the moment Dabormida had just shot three men with his revolver, he then shot at my informant and missed him. The Abyssinian got behind a tree, and when Dabormida turned to face another of his enemies he shot him dead, hitting him between the shoulder blades and he immediately pitched forward and died. This man carried off the General's sword, photographs, pocket-book and some other property, and afterwards sold them to an Italian officer who was a prisoner at Adese Ababa.

With regard to General Baratieri's position during the battle, Ras Mangesha, Ras Aloula, and Ras Hagos of the Tembien were all most anxious to capture him, and had given orders to their officers and men to find him out. In vain did they look for his flag, marking his position on the field. His flag was never hoisted, and neither friend nor foe knew in what part of the field to look for him. Sometime after his retreat it was seen by the Abyssinians, being carried far away in the rear, evidently to attract the attention of the stragglers as a rallying point to cover the retreat. It was followed for sometime, but the General and his followers had too long a start, and the Abyssinians could not come up with them. Had the Tigrean army had any cavalry like in former times, they would no doubt have captured the General and his staff and many more prisoners.

For nearly five years Ras Aloula had been anxious to get hold of General Baratieri, who had taken his houses, lands, and property, not only in the Hamasen but in Tigré as well; the only house that had been spared was that in Axum, the Italians owing to the sacred nature of the town not daring to plunder this place, as they would have altogether lost the confidence of the entire Abyssinian people which they wished partly to retain. The escape of General Baratieri for Ras Aloula was a great blow as no doubt he would have held him for a very high ransom.

The war indemnity paid by the Italians was all taken by King Menelek, and I have not heard up till the present that any of the northern leaders received any part of the money, although they were the chief sufferers by the war, and bore the brunt of the fighting. This I have heard has caused great discontent amongst high and low, and it is not at all unlikely, that it will bear fruit in the future, and make the northerners more eager to improve their present condition, when an opportunity arises, so that they may enjoy the benefits of the same good and stable government that their

neighbours and compatriots now do in Erithrea under the Italian Government.

A short description here will not be out of place of the Abyssinian formation of attack and the way in which their army is arranged; in Appendix No. VIII. will be found the Abyssinian names of their commanders and principal officials. The formation of their camps is nearly always the same, and it will be seen that it forms a cross, and no matter in which way it is attacked the force can always act in the same manner, but the leading troops, under the Fituari or commander of the advance guard, become either right or left wing or reserve as the case may be, and the other commanders the same. The leader, be it king, Ras, or Dedjazmatch in command, has always the most troops and he encamps in the centre and rear with a force on his right under a Kenezmatch or commander of the right wing, a force on his left under a Gerazmatch or commander of the left wing, and in front a Fituari or commander of the advance guard. They do not have a title for rear guard as no soldier would wish to have such an unenviable position, but it is generally under an Asmatch or general of division. These different forces are also divided into the same cross formation. The camp followers and non-fighting men and women encamp round the soldiers, and they are all more or less mixed up together. The horses and mules are also picketed near their owners' tents or camp-fire, and to a European onlooker the camp seems to be in a state of confusion, and no doubt a night attack on it by European troops would very likely succeed, especially if machine guns and artillery could be brought to bear.

The Abyssinians like the Dervishes never attack in large forces at night time although they will keep up a harassing fire with a small force at a long distance. They wake, however, long before daylight, and in the early grey of the morning they are astir and ready to take the field as soon as it is light, and order soon reigns out of the apparent chaos. It is not to be supposed that they will not march at night, as one of their favourite manœuvres is to leave a few people to keep their watch-fires burning all night, and start comparatively early in the evening so as to make a long march to cut the lines of communication of an invading army and throw an overwhelming force on any weak point the moment after daybreak.

In olden days, amongst themselves before guns were

common, the infantry used to fight in phalanx formation, the few gunners being placed in rear of each corner and centre of the sides and protected by men with spears and shields so that they might load their pieces in safety after they were discharged. The cavalry are the first to engage, and if defeated seek refuge behind the phalanx, trying to bring their pursuers in range of those that are armed with guns; however, this kind of warfare is nearly obsolete, and entirely so against Europeans or natives armed with modern weapons.

They now try to surround an invading army, and when the manœuvre is carried out, advance towards the centre making use of every bit of cover possible, and then simultaneously the whole force will attack and try to get to close quarters and then discard their rifles for the shield and sword which they always wear on the right side. As soon as the close attack commences, the mounted lancers will come up and hurl their throwing spears over the heads of the infantry and thereby help to break down the defence of the enemy.

The circle round the invading force is formed at first by the troops of the Fituari dividing into two parties and making a wide detour round the flanks of the enemy to get to the rear. These parties will be followed at a short distance by the right and left wings advancing to get well on and a little round each flank, while the centre and reserve advance against the enemy's centre. The movement will be carried out at a steady trot and at a good distance from the enemy's position, and it will be covered by a cloud of skirmishers always steadily advancing under cover when possible. In a country of the nature of Abyssinia, which can only be manœuvred over so slowly by European infantry, it is very difficult to prevent the defenders of the country from carrying out their formation, and it could only be checked by mounted infantry and artillery. The latter would have to be mountain batteries of quick firers, as horse artillery could not be got over these very broken and rocky paths, and would have to keep to the high roads. Cavalry would be useful on the line of communications, and if a battle was fought on the open downs or in the broad cultivated valleys they might be employed, but the Abyssinians need never offer battle in country unfavourable to themselves, and would most likely fight in the different belts of thick bush which cover the numerous ranges of broken boulder-strewn hills.

With regard to the towns in Abyssinia, there are, I con-

sider, only three that are worth taking and holding, those are Adowa and Axum in the north and Harar in the south, and if these were in the hands of an invader it would give him a great prestige as Adowa and Harar are the two principal mercantile towns for the north and south respectively, and Axum is the chief ancient sacred town where all kings of the country should be crowned, and it also contains the old historical buildings and nearly all the most valued archives. The present ruler keeps such a large standing army in his near vicinity which of course attracts such a large non-fighting population as well that a time soon arrives when firewood for cooking purposes ceases to exist, and a fresh town in a wooded vicinity has to be chosen. Within the last few years the capital has been changed from Ancobar to Entotto, and from Entotto to Adese Ababa, and it will have shortly to be removed to some other place as the fuel supply is giving out, and the Abyssinian burns a very large quantity of firewood. During Holy Cross week in September, when there is the annual muster of the soldiers from all the surrounding districts, the soldiers think nothing of destroying fences, unroofing the houses of the poor, or cutting down the few remaining shade trees to supply themselves with fuel. When the king can do without a big standing army this question will right itself, or when he considers himself strong enough to live without a large standing army in a more fertile and better wooded country than the bleak wind-swept downs of Shoa. The late King Johannes never kept the large army that his successor does, although he could put more men into the field than King Menelek, and he always lived in a very fertile and well wooded district.

At present the Abyssinians are not to be so much feared. The invader, if he can once enter and seize a position and fortify it, and has a sufficient quantity of quick-firing cannon and machine guns, with ample ammunition for both, to defend it as it remains to be seen how long their soldiers could stand punishment in attacking a strongly defended position. They have any amount of pluck, and are very resourceful in expedients, but up till the present they have not sufficient modern artillery to silence an invader's guns if properly worked. The present ruler has the money and can procure anything from the French who will always be glad to teach his soldiers to handle any new weapon that he requires, and if King Menelek fortifies the passes leading into his country, as the French have already given out, the

invasion of Abyssinia will become a very difficult undertaking.

The only remaining problem is to learn how to feed a large standing army on a long campaign, and this King Menelek cannot as yet do except in his own country. He has a number of large granaries in many parts of his own dominions, and of course these are easily added to and filled by more land being put under cultivation, or by a heavy tax in kind on the grain grown by the peasantry. The Egyptians, when they were at Harar, increased the ancient underground granaries that existed when they took the town, and they could easily keep a stock sufficient to feed ten thousand soldiers for a year or more. Should this system be extended to all the provinces, there is more than sufficient transport in the country to keep these depôts filled, and a large army could then be kept not only on the frontier but act on the offensive in the lower countries as well.

It was no idle threat of the late King Johannes when he told the late Khalifa that he would proceed to Khartoum. The first step was to Gallabat, and that once in his hands it would have served as a depôt for his grain supplies that could have reached there unmolested from any part of Western Abyssinia, and his advance could have been made down the Rahad river and Blue Nile to Khartoum in the following cool season.

What King Johannes was capable of accomplishing might be done by his successor, and with semi-European help and the advice of ambitious foreigners that surround him, Abyssinia would be a powerful enemy. The great danger to an unpopular king attempting such an expedition would be in the absence of the army, a rising of an oppressed peasantry, backed up by some European power to put down the military party. The arming of the peasantry and farmer class with modern weapons has not altogether been a blessing to the present ruler, and may end not only in his downfall but by that of the barons as well. The constant stream of arms that is being allowed into the country is a menace to the peace of North-Eastern Africa, and it is only to be hoped that they will not be used for any hostile purpose against the neighbouring countries, and delay the pacification of this part of Africa which sadly wants a long series of quiet years to regain its ancient commercial standing and importance.

The future of Abyssinia will be a most interesting one to

watch, and whether the power that is now in the hands of the present ruler will be used for the good of his country or for his own private ends. Its large military force in unfriendly hands might prove a great danger to the Soudan and Erithrea, and it must not be judged on the basis of our battles against the Mahdi, the experience gained in that country, so easily manœuvred over, would be of little use against these hardy mountaineers, and it must be remembered that they also gained their victories over the Dervishes with the greatest of ease when they were not nearly so well armed as they are now, and it cannot be expected that they will come out into the open and allow themselves to be shot down, as the Arabs did in all the fights in the Soudan.

CHAPTER X

BUILDINGS AND THEIR INHABITANTS

IT is very difficult to say from where the Abyssinian adopted his architecture and the plan of building his house; that he has receded instead of having advanced in the art of building, is evident from the ruins of the old houses and from the very few perfect specimens that are still to be found in the north and central parts of the country. The design of the majority of the buildings seems to have originated from the circular stick and straw hut of the more savage and less civilised African, and copied in stone on an enlarged scale, with an improvement in thatching, necessitated by the colder climate and the heavy rains, so as to keep the more valuable property possessed from getting spoilt.

The savage African has no property that can be spoilt by getting damp and the Abyssinian has; the former builds a smaller, similar house to the one he lives in within his dwelling to store his grain in, which he thatches, and he plasters its sides with mud to prevent the contents getting spoilt, and the rats and mice from eating the corn. The Abyssinian does precisely the same with his grain store, but he does not cover it, and he also hangs most of his property on the walls of his house or in niches made in the walls.

The circular house is used from the kings and princes downwards to the lowest member of the community. Then there is the square or rectangular house with a pitched, thatched roof which is common all over the country, and a compromise between the two, namely, two parallel walls with rounded ends, and lastly, the flat-roofed houses of one or two stories in height besides the ground floor. The square, flat-roofed houses are, I believe, nearly as ancient as those with the circular roofs, as the majority of them are found in the north, and the foundations of the old ruins of Koheita and Axum are nearly all square or rectangular; but some circular ones are found, so it must be a matter of conjecture which of the two are the most ancient.

The churches are all circular with the exception of those built by the Jesuits, and the remains of the old temples of the ancients are rectangular.

The dwelling-houses built of circular shape are sometimes very large, and the following description of the town house and grounds at Adowa, belonging to Ledj Mertcha, the late King Johannes' envoy to Her Majesty the Queen in 1884, will give a good idea of what the well-to-do classes in the country live in. His house is a typical one, but there are many of them better arranged, and enclosures that contain more buildings, and some of the properties of the big officials in the country outside the towns cover an immense area.

Ledj Mertcha's property is above thirty yards by fifty yards in measurement, and is surrounded by a well-built stone wall about twelve feet in height. The entrance into the enclosure is by a door made out of strong planks of the Wanza tree, or any other suitable timber, such as the sycamore fig, or juniper. The doors of these outer enclosures are generally very strongly made and some three or four inches thick, and always open inwards, presenting a smooth surface to the road. They are generally closed with two heavy bars of very strong wood, so great strength would have to be used to break them open. There are no hinges and the side frames are in one piece and fit into holes in the lintel and floor plates, which are generally massive baulks of timber. The door opens into a porch which is generally used as a stable or cow-house, and sometimes it is fitted with a couple of seats or beds where the lower servants sleep.

The first courtyard is used for keeping the cattle in, and perhaps there are a couple of sheds in it, to which the cattle can retire during the rainy season. The courtyard in the dry season is always horribly dirty, and during the wet is sometimes eighteen inches or two feet deep in stinking mire; stepping stones are placed across the courtyard, so the inhabitants can cross without getting dirty.

The dwelling-houses perhaps make up the other two sides of the enclosure, and if they do not quite touch, will be joined by a fence or some bush, so as to prevent the cattle from entering into the garden or going on to the portion of a fairly clean floor which is always found within the enclosures. This floor is always made of common earth tightly beaten down, and it serves for many purposes, and it is in fine weather the place where the majority of the household

work is done, such as preparing and cleaning the grain for grinding, and various other duties which necessitate a strong light. It is a playing place for the small children, and the rendezvous for all the inmates of the enclosure, chickens, cats, puppies, lambs and kids as well.

The other part of the ground not taken up by the houses will be devoted to useful garden plants and vegetables, such as potatoes, onions, garlic and herbs, with perhaps a few peach, fig, banana and pomegranate trees. Pumpkins are trained up the sides of the house, their heavy fruit resting on the roof. The first of the big circular houses, which is used chiefly by the men, may be about thirty to forty feet in diameter. The outside walls will be about ten to twelve feet in height and at least two feet in thickness; they are built of undressed stones which come from the nearest mountain, and they generally have one flat and smooth side, which is placed outwards, and the interstices between them are filled with small stones and well-kneaded stiff clay. Spaces are left for two doors and two windows, which are generally equidistant from each other, one of the doors opening into the outer yard, the other into the inner yard or garden.

Inside walls are built from five to six feet from the outer wall, and would represent four portions of a segment of a circle, and, as they are higher than the outside wall, they help to support the roof; the rafters of which protrude for about three feet from the outer wall, and all meet in the centre of the building. The rafters are then bound together, commencing from the bottom, by ties made from some pliable wood, and then continued in tiers, about two feet apart, till the apex of the roof is reached, and when this is secured the whole construction is very strong and will support a great weight. The rafters and ties are generally most neatly worked and generally covered with different coloured cloth or painted. They look very well at first, but soon get dirty, and then they do not look well until the whole gets a perfect dark mahogany colour from age. The thatch, which is made of straw or rushes, is about eighteen inches or two feet in depth, and is kept in position by bands of the same material. The top of the house outside is capped with an earthenware or wooden crown surmounted usually with an eight-pointed cross or some fanciful design. The Abyssinians thatch most beautifully, and their roofs are always watertight. The spaces between the outer and inner walls are used for various purposes; they make four rooms,

which may be subdivided, and then there are eight divisions. Perhaps the two on each side of the door leading into the outer yard will be used as stables for the riding mules and horses, and two others for storing forage in; the other rooms as stores for grain, flour and other food and household effects. The space between the two windows will be raised about a foot above the main floor, which is made of hard clay and beaten down level. The walls will also be plastered with clay and finely-chopped straw, and perhaps white-washed or coloured a chrome yellow.

On the raised platform between the windows the native bedsteads are placed; they are of exactly the same construction as found throughout Egypt, Arabia and the East. During the daytime the bedding will be removed and Persian rugs or some gaudy carpet will be covered over them, and here the owner of the house receives his visitors, takes his meals and transacts his business. The doors are of the same description as the outer one already mentioned, but generally open outwards; and the windows, which are generally very small, are guileless of glass, which is not used in the country, and are closed at night with shutters. The adze is the usual tool used for smoothing woodwork, and the carpenters of the country turn out sometimes most excellent work with this instrument, including the making of Arabesque arches and pillars, which are sometimes found as ornaments in the better-class houses.

The furniture in the houses consists of a few chests used for storing things in and which serve as seats, a few wooden stools of rough workmanship, a low table or two to hold the tray on which the meals are served. Cow-horns are let into the walls as pegs to hang the arms, such as swords, spears, shields and guns, and the saddlery upon, and niches in the walls to place things in. Sometimes the recesses made, which face the windows, have curtains which can be drawn across so as to give a little privacy, but the whole furnishing is of the most meagre description. Rushes with a slightly aromatic odour or fresh grass are sometimes strewn upon the floor when an honoured guest is expected, or a dinner or supper party is given. These rushes or the grass when they are dry get full of fleas, which hide in the hollow stalks during the day, and come out at night-time and work their wicked will on any European who is obliged to sleep inside the house.

It will be seen that the fittings of the house that is used in the daytime are not numerous; but still the interior looks

well when it is thoroughly clean, and the arms tastefully arranged in trophies along the walls, and the seats and cushions covered with bright silks, Persian rugs over part of the floor and the rest covered with freshly gathered rushes. A curious accompaniment are the heads of the mules and horses sticking out of their stables, and on guest-days they generally have their gaudy headstalls on, which are richly and handsomely ornamented with silver. These animals that live in the house are always kept for riding purposes, and the only exercise they take is when they are sent morning and evening to the water. The flooring of the stalls is made of rough stones, and a small hole through the outside of the walls is the only drainage. Naturally there is always a bad smell in the house the moment the doors and windows are closed, and towards daylight in the morning, owing to there being no ventilation except through the ill-fitting windows and doors, the atmosphere becomes something disgusting.

The second house belonging to the establishment is generally kept for the women and servants; it will be slightly smaller and perhaps have only one door and a couple of windows and no inner wall, and will be supplied with an upper story. The lower room will be about nine feet high. The flooring of the upper story will be supported by several stout posts, and the walls of the top room may be four to five feet in height, on which is placed the same kind of roof as that of the men's house. Communication with the upper story is generally by an outside stone staircase that leads to a small square terrace on which a door opens from the top room. Under this outer square terrace and the staircase is a room which may be used for keeping the chickens, sheep and goats in. The bottom floor of the house will be used as the kitchen and for performing the household work, such as grinding the corn, baking, making the hydromel, spinning the cotton-thread preparatory to weaving, and for all the general household avocations. The upper story will be reserved for the mistress of the house and her sisters and her cousins and her aunts, and any other unmarried female relation belonging to the husband. I never can make out where all the Abyssinian's female relations come from; he only has one wife, and she as a rule takes great care not to allow him to live like a Mahomedan.

As long as times are good and food is not scarce it is all right, but in famine time it is very hard work to feed such a lot of mouths, and a good deal of misery takes place. A

number of children and a number of servants in Abyssinia is nearly always a sign of wealth, as there are more hands to do the work, and more ground can be put under cultivation. There are no expenses for education and no foreign luxuries to be purchased, and clothing is but a small item, a yard or two of Manchester cloth making the children's dresses, which are not elaborate. Curiously with patriarchal people living in communities a large family is a source of wealth; just the reverse to what it is in England.

Some villages in Abyssinia are composed entirely of one family, four and five generations being alive at the same time; the first house in the village being built by a married couple who cultivated a few acres, and they increase and multiply till perhaps thirty or forty good houses have sprung up, with a church and perhaps a thousand acres or more put under cultivation. These large families are also found in the Soudan amongst the wandering shepherds, and a good example is the Digni family, to which our old friend Osman Digna belongs, and the Abdul Rahmanab tribe started by one called Abdul Rahman; lots of examples could be given if required of tribes springing from one man and his numerous wives.

The upper story or the women's quarters are just as poorly furnished as the men's; a few beds and boxes, and heaps of raw cotton or uncleaned sheep's wool and goat's hair, and the floor covered with a few tanned ox hides with the hair off, and some dressed sheep or goat skins with the wool or hair left on. These light skins are made into bags to contain all sorts of household belongings, and grain and drugs, or any odds and ends that may prove useful.

The Abyssinian houses are generally very dirty, and swarm with vermin of all sorts and of the worst kinds; and, as I know to my cost, domestic and personal insects are to be got either in the king's palace or in the peasants' huts. It is only those Abyssinians that have travelled, or been servants to Europeans, that keep their houses fairly clean and set a better example, which one would think would be followed with avidity by all; they have been taught the benefits of cleanliness and really see its utility, so they practise it, and they wear properly washed linen and will undress themselves before they go to bed, and during the hot weather will bathe daily, and wash their hands and faces certainly once a day during the cold season. This is a scale of decency that compares well with the majority of the lower class Continental European.

The peasants' houses of circular form are not nearly so good as the one I have just described, and the family will very likely all live together in one room; perhaps about one half of the floor will be raised about two feet higher than the other, and on it will be another raised divan running round the walls; there will be one door, and perhaps a window, but not always. The cooking will be done on the centre of the raised floor, and the lower floor at night-time will be filled with the favourite animals, if there is not enough room for them in the outhouses. By force, owing to having been storm bound, I have been compelled to remain a night in such a house, and the miseries of the long hours passed are still fresh in my memory. The fusty air, the myriads of fleas and bugs, who only seem too delighted to get hold of a thin-skinned European, with a new brand of blood to sample, made sleep impossible, and every moment between the heavy showers and thunderstorms I used to seek refuge in the courtyard, only to be driven in again by the next rain. I thought morning never would come, and how welcome was the first steel-grey colour in the eastern heavens, giving signs of the coming daylight.

The peasants used to offer every hospitality, giving me perhaps the only native bedstead they possessed, and their cleanest and newest tanned skin, while they all slept on the raised divan, and looked, wrapped up in their once white shammas and clothes, like mouldy corpses. The only light would be from the expiring embers of the wood fire, which would suddenly flare up when some partly consumed log would fall down, and then the cows and other animals could be seen for a short time, or a line of chickens asleep on some beam. Anything moving would be of interest, and watching the rats and mice playing about the floor, or picking up odd grains of corn, would be a most exciting incident in the long watches of the night. Then the fire would die down again, and there would be only the red glare of the embers; and then I listened to the subdued noise of the cows chewing the cud, the snort of a mule, a temporary change of position among the goats and kids, with a little free butting; or father Abyssinian commenced to snore, some female began muttering in her sleep, or one of the children had a bad dream and woke with a scream, and then finding there was nothing wrong, turned over and went to sleep again. One cannot smoke all night, and the amusement of bug spearing with a long thorn on the ox

skin (for a prairie) that covers the bedstead (this is capital sport to pass away the time, and one soon gets expert at it) unfortunately can only be carried on when the fire burns up brightly; so one sits and doses till at last one is startled out of a half sleep by the flapping of wings and the crowing of the cock, a sure sign that day is near; then some of the mouldy corpses commence to unwind, which generally prove to be women, who are generally up long before the men, and they set about their daily avocations. One could spin a rather good yarn about the flapping of these wings, and the people getting up after the night of purgatory, but one had better not. I have always welcomed my camp or the advent of my luggage after a night spent in a native hut.

The square houses, if belonging to the peasantry, are arranged exactly the same as the circular ones, with the raised platform at one end, and the rest of the space given up to the cattle. The wickerwork receptacles plastered with mud to contain the grain are always placed in the inhabited part of the room. When a peasant commences to be rich enough to add to his house, he generally builds a room on the top, if it is flat-roofed, or a new house if it is one with a pitched roof, as it entails taking it down and great labour to put it up again, and then the old house is given up entirely to the animals. The staircase up to the top room or rooms is always built from the outside, and if the whole of the roof is not taken up with the new additions, it is used for the same household purposes as the beaten open floor mentioned before.

The moment the cattle are led out in the morning, which is hardly ever before sunrise, or if a dull morning perhaps a couple of hours after it gets light, the house is cleaned out, which it needs badly. It is easily understood if any epidemic disease among the cattle is prevalent in the country, how easily it is spread, and what ravages it will commit when the beasts are herded together in the dwelling-houses, and no proper cleansing of their ill-ventilated shelter ever takes place. The Abyssinian is a fairly healthy subject, but when cholera breaks out, which is rare, and the bubonic plague, which takes the form of bubonic fever, rarer still, what a chance there is of infection. A merciful providence spares the country from these visitations, and perhaps the only disease which may be considered to be very fatal is the small-pox, and that only among the unvaccinated.

The Abyssinian is not nearly such a fool as regards vaccination as some of the English fanatics; he has had experience of many epidemics, and has seen the terrible ravages caused by this loathsome complaint among those that have never had the chance of being vaccinated, when perhaps ninety per cent. of those that have not been operated on die, and the majority of those that recover are marked for life or sightless; while those that have been to the sea coast and have been fortunate enough to have been vaccinated escape altogether, or perhaps only three or four per cent. of those taken with it die. I do not believe there is any nation that are more willing to put themselves under the doctor's care than these Abyssinians, but they want the medicine and the attendance for nothing. At present they have not the money to pay with, but if they get the least better for the treatment they receive they overwhelm the doctor with presents, and in one morning he will be brought food enough to last him for a couple of months. A doctor, if he was a good all round man and a good sportsman, might have a fine time in the country and live for next to nothing, and certainly get a rapid insight into tropical and other diseases.

Before going on to describe any more of the Abyssinian dwellings and mentioning the details of the houses, it must be said, that from the highest class to the lowest, their houses are utterly devoid of any ventilation except what is given by the doors and windows; and for the whole year round the door will be closed during the night, and only in the hot season, which lasts for three to five months, will the windows be left open. With ninety-nine out of every hundred houses, drainage and sanitary arrangements absolutely do not exist in any form or shape, and the people are not as decent as the domestic cat in their habits.

My old friend Ras Aloula lent me his private house at Axum for a month on one of my visits there, and an account of it will serve as a fair example of the kind of dwelling generally used by the highest classes of the country. The dwelling-house was well built and circular in form, with two doors and four windows; the latter being large double windows which let in plenty of air and light, their dimension being about six feet in height by about eight feet in breadth. The sashes were made of the wood of the Wanza tree of a nice dark brown colour, and their arched tops were arabesque in pattern. The broad window sills were about three feet from the floor, and made of the same wood, and

with a few soft cushions served as excellent seats. The doors were also double, and of the same arched pattern as the windows. There was no inner circular wall, but a division was formed by two out-jutting walls, which took up about two-thirds of the diameter of the room, and from a beam running between them hung two red cloth curtains, which when drawn divided the room into two parts and gave privacy.

I used to occupy the furthest part, and my door opened on to a smooth grass lawn, shaded by a sycamore fig tree, while other common fig trees, pomegranates, and limes were planted round the walls of the enclosure. Part of the lawn was taken up by one of the large fallen carved stone obelisks so common at Axum and of which so little is known, and their history will be an interesting one when full details of them are found out. The house was thirty-six feet in inside diameter, the roof very lofty and beautifully made, and the rafters and ties decorated with dark blue and red cloth, and was supported by a circle of round wooden pillars made from juniper timber, neatly smoothed with the adze. The furniture consisted of a clean wooden Indian sofa and a native bedstead, and were covered with very old and valuable Persian rugs, and on the floor were Indian and Persian carpets. In this room I spent a very agreeable time, one of the pleasantest ever passed in Abyssinia.

At Axum my day was taken up by walks in the early mornings and afternoons, visiting the ruins and sights of the place, and the rest in receiving visitors and talking about Abyssinia. Unfortunately I did not return to Axum, and I left many notes and a collection of curiosities there which I shall never see again.

Besides the dwelling-house there were two other buildings nearly the same size, one used as a kitchen, which for an Abyssinian one was very clean and well kept, and the other as a servants' house. The latter was divided off by walls running out from the sides of the house into four rooms, with a passage between each, and as the passages were at right angles to each other they formed a cross. This is a curious feature in the internal arrangements of most of the houses inhabited by Christian Abyssinians, and is seldom or ever found in those occupied by Mahomedans. At the end of each passage, over the doors and windows, are very often hung pictures of our Lord, the Virgin Mary, or of some saint; St George killing the dragon being one of the

commonest. These pictures are generally coloured prints brought from Jerusalem, or the work of some native artist. These two houses were about fifteen yards from the front door of the dwelling-house, and between them and the front gate of the enclosure, arranged along the walls, the stables and storehouses were situated, formed by a wall being built parallel to the big wall of the enclosure. These storehouses and stables were neatly thatched with straw or rush grass, and looked very well and in keeping with the other erections in the compound. The enclosure was altogether about one hundred yards in depth by about seventy yards in breadth, and about an acre and a half in extent.

The entrance opened on to the main street of Axum, *vis-à-vis* to the church and sanctuary, and a description of this will complete the account of this establishment. The double doors open inwards, so that they can be easily barricaded; on each side through the masonry of the wall, is a loop hole which can be used in defence of the gate. The doors open into a big porch, with a room on each side where the guardians stop during the day, above the porch is either one big room or several smaller ones, in which during disturbed times a guard of soldiers can be placed. The two side rooms of the porch project about a yard each side of the gate, and the upper room projects still further. Over the gate, and immediately above the entrance, there are holes in the floor through which, in case of attack, boiling water or hot fat can be poured on those attempting to force a way through.

I have occasionally seen some noisy beggar, who has been knocking at the gate demanding alms, and refusing to go away when told, get a utensil full of dirty water upset over him through these holes, and it has nearly always the effect of driving him away, much to the delight of the small children standing round. The upper room above the porch is also loop-holed all round, and from its height it commands the walls of the enclosure, so any heads of people trying to scale the walls offer a good mark to those that are defending it. One very seldom sees flanking towers in these enclosures; but the guard-house I have attempted to describe will be repeated in the centre of each wall if the enclosure stands by itself, and perhaps a series of them will be together with adjoining walls, so the other houses will make with their overhanging guard-houses the defence complete.

The description of the Chaldean Nestorian Christian

houses of Kurdistan, is not at all unlike those that are found in some parts of Abyssinia, especially those of Axum, Adowa, Macalle, Socota, Abbi-Addi, etc., perhaps the most ancient towns of the country. They are flat-roofed, and either of one or two stories, and show little architectural taste, being perfectly plain. A large wall is built round a rectangular space of ground, and the thick boundary wall serves for one of the walls of the houses that are constructed in the enclosure. The staircases to the upper rooms are also always on the outside of these houses, as the protection to the premises is the door of the enclosure that opens on to the street. Any house found in Abyssinia with a staircase inside the house can trace its origin to the Jesuits, or to people that have built their houses after this pattern, or that have travelled in a foreign country. The inside plan of the house is severely simple, the rooms generally opening into each other, and there is very seldom a passage with rooms opening off it. Those with a passage generally belong to the richer Mahomedans, who keep a harem, so at night time the different wives may be separated. The poorer Mahomedans of the country who keep more than one wife are obliged to let Mrs Monday, Mrs Tuesday and the ladies of the other days of the week sleep in the same room.

The square-shaped, flat-roofed houses are built with the exception of the beams, windows and doors entirely of stone, and the roof and terraces are made of a layer of flat slatey sandstone rock, which is very common in the country, and can easily be detached in the quarries where it is found, and these are very numerous in the northern part. Besides from the quarries, these stones are got from where some gigantic land-slip has taken place, and this saves much labour, as the stones are found ready for use. The slabs are very often six or seven feet long, by about two feet broad, and from six to nine inches thick; they are admirably suited for paving-stones, or for making staircases, doorsteps and for general building purposes. They are also placed on the top of the boundary walls to prevent the rain from entering and washing out the clay that is used for mortar to bind the stones together.

The palace at Macalle, that belonged to the late King Johannes being made from designs by an Italian, and being entirely European in its character, requires no comment in this chapter.

The town of Harar having been inhabited so long by the

Arabs and the Egyptians, takes after the ordinary Arab and Egyptian settlements, and most of the buildings in the border towns, are completely Arab in construction, and of course are of no more interest than the common fellah dwellings in the Egyptian Delta. If anything, they are not so well made and elaborate, and are if possible more dirty; stone, however, is substituted for the sun-dried bricks and mud.

The Galla houses, commencing south of the Tacazze, are nearly always of circular or oval form, and are made with wattle of sticks and dhurra stalks, plastered over on both sides with mud. The roofs are of thatch, similar to that of the Abyssinians. The sides of the house are sometimes not more than three feet in height, and the inside of the house is excavated to the extent of about three feet, the earth taken out being firmly beaten against the outside of the erection; this is done for the sake of warmth, as the nights in the Galla uplands are bitterly cold, and wood very scarce and in some places entirely unprocurable. The cooking has to be done entirely with cow-chips, which are made into cakes as in Egypt, and are sold at so much a mule or a donkey load. These Gallas are filthily dirty, and all huddle together at night under one cover for warmth's sake, their morals of course are nil.

A more primitive way of building a house is often seen, and is from sods of earth, which are cut the same as grass turf for lawns in England, the roots of the grass holding the earth together. These are placed one on the top of the other until a square space is walled in to the height of about six or seven feet, when it is thatched over, or poles, which are got from a long distance, are laid across from wall to wall, and a little dhurra stalk evenly placed on the top, and then turfs are laid over all. This will keep ordinary rain out, but when the roof gets perfectly sodden it leaks. These huts look perfectly brown during the dry season, but when the rains set in the roots of the grass and flowers begin to grow and they become perfectly green, and many sorts of flowering plants will be found on one house. A door made of wood in some parts of the Galla country is a rarity, and the house is closed with a screen made of dhurra stalks. The houses look like green rifle butts, and the doors like light brown or yellow targets. On the hill-sides, covered with vegetation, these villages are not discernible for any great distance, and if one's attention was not drawn by some people moving

about them they would not be noticed at all. These villages are generally situated in such a peaceful country that they have no defence and no ditch round them, and are generally in a district where there are no hyenas or wild beasts to hurt the animals, and only have a slight turf wall to prevent them from straying at night, and a slight covering over the enclosure that serves to keep off the worst of the rain.

None of the Abyssinian houses have chimneys, and the smoke soon colours the interior of the houses a dark brown. The smoke soon fills the whole house and a little escapes by the doors and windows, and how at night time in cold weather, when everything is closed up, the people do not all get suffocated by the pungent smoke of the cow-chip fires I never could make out. There are several woods in Abyssinia that when thoroughly dried make very little smoke, and by far the best of these is that of the wild olive tree. It burns very slowly and gives off a great heat, and leaves a beautiful clean white ash that is excellent for many purposes, more especially for curing skins of animals and making them pliable. This wood is burnt in earthenware or iron braziers by the well-to-do people at night time, and the first thing in the morning during the rains and the cold weather, but it is not in all parts of the country where it is to be found. I have often sat over one of these fires with the greatest of pleasure, and it was sometimes with much trouble that I could get my Somali servants out of the house till the sun was up. Bed, and sitting around the kitchen fire had great attractions for them when the thermometer was down to near freezing point, with a heavy Scotch mist, and the view limited to a distance of about ten yards from the door.

It is wonderful to me how the natives of the high upland country manage to exist with their light clothing and the leg bare from the knee downwards; the weather is quite as bad as it is sometimes in England on the downs and moors; the puddles covered with ice, and mist, rain, sleet, and an occasional snowstorm. I have shivered when dressed in the warmest of tweed suits, with flannel underclothing, thick worsted stockings and stout shooting boots, with a heavy ulster over all; while the natives have been clad in nothing but light home-made smocked shape cotton shirt, knee breeches and a small cape made out of sheep's wool or goat's hair. How glad every one is when the sun gets well above the mountain tops and the mists clear away, and how pleased one is to get to the lee of some rock out of the wind and

bask in its rays and get the toes and fingers warm again. The greater part of the Waag and Lasta provinces, the Wollo country and the northern part of Shoa are bitterly cold, and I met with weather like I have just mentioned in October, November and December. I am told that in some years that the wheat crop gets destroyed if one of these very cold snaps occur while the plant is in bloom.

It is not only the human beings that feel the cold, as the animals look miserable as well; they huddle together in flocks, and I have often noticed perhaps as many as a couple of hundred sheep packed close to each other as ever they can get, and not a head to be seen, nothing but legs and woolly backs from which a slight steam arose. Goats do not huddle together so much, but get under the lee of a bush or a rock, and I never remember, no matter how bad the storm has been, seeing a lot of goats together without one doing sentry on some rock with his back to the rain and his head down, but always giving every few moments a rapid glance on each side and behind him. It is a curious thing they never keep a sentry if they have some small boys or girls herding them. I have remarked this to my servant who always travelled with me, and he said he had never noticed it, but afterwards he found it was a fact.

The Abyssinian towns are always irregularly built and very seldom have wide streets. The broadest of them always leading to the church or churches or the market places, and the width of them seldom exceeds more than four or five yards. The lanes that branch off from these streets are very narrow, two laden animals not being able to pass one another in most places, and if a string of pack mules or horses are met, refuge has to be taken in some doorway until they pass. I remember meeting one day in a very narrow lane at Adowa a run away bullock with big horns that knocked against each side of the walls. I could hear the noise before he came round a turning, as soon as I saw what was the cause of the noise I fled, and happily I fled first into a friendly doorway and the bullock after me. It turned out to be his home and he was returning from ploughing and wanted evidently to get back quickly to tea or supper, but all the same I should have been upset, as I doubt whether he would have stopped for me, notwithstanding the Abyssinian horned cattle are so gentle. I have often had to dismount from my mule and enter some gateway to let them pass.

The Abyssinians, with the exception of the soldiery, as a rule are most polite and will always give way for a European, many of them in the north go so far as to dismount from their animals and make a low bow when one passes. Some of the soldiery, since the defeat of the Italians at Adowa, are most insulting and monopolise the whole of the high road, and try to ride one off when there is plenty of room for all. I always try and get to the side of the road when soldiers pass, so as not to run the risk of being insulted, but I am afraid European prestige in some places in the country is on the wane, and the higher officers are nearly as bad as the private soldiers. An Amhara officer at Axum purposely rode me into the wall, and a few minutes afterwards I met Ras Aloula, who dismounted and came and greeted me. I told him of the officer's rudeness, he sent for him and had him beaten in the market-place, much to the delight of the Tigréan people who detest the Amharans.

During the dry season the towns in Abyssinia do not look nearly so well as after the rains. The roofs and walls of the houses are then covered with vegetation, creepers, bright flowers of all sorts, stone crops, lichens, ferns and many other plants nearly cover the stone work and hide the walls with a thick and luxurious vegetation, making a great contrast from when everything is dried up; the houses then look quite pretty, and I know of no country in which, with a little labour, prettier and more interesting gardens can be made out of the native flowers, trees and plants.

Some of the country farms belonging to the large land-owners are really very nice places and are fairly well arranged. They are generally situated on some level space on the side of a mountain or hill, and cover with their yards, gardens and many out-houses several acres of ground. The space taken up is always enclosed with a thick hedge and a protecting ditch sometimes of a considerable width, which is generally filled with thorns so as to prevent wild animals getting any foot-hold to force their way through the live hedge, which they otherwise might be able to do. The thorns do not prevent the utility of the ditch as a drain, as they are only thrown in loosely and the water can run through them. The hedges differ according to what part of the country the farm is in; a great favourite is the candelabra euphorbia or kol-qual which is planted at first close together, and as the trees grow the surplus ones are gradually thinned out until it makes a close hedge, impossible to penetrate owing to the

strength of the stems and the sharp thorns with which they are furnished. These trees often grow to a height of thirty or forty feet, and when in flower look very pretty; the seed pods are bright crimson, red, orange, or light yellow, and a thick mass of this plant, with its dark green stems and many coloured seed pods that grow at regular intervals on the four angles of each fleshy branch, looks very handsome. There is another euphorbia with a smooth fleshy round branch that is also used; the small stems are very brittle and exude a very poisonous milk that will cause blindness should any of it happen to get into the eye. This tree does not reach to the same size as the kol-qual, but it makes an equally impassable barrier to the farm.

These main enclosures vary in size according to the wealth of the owner and may be from four to forty acres in area. The buildings contained in them are often very numerous and will consist of several good dwelling houses, barns, stables, cattle sheds and labourers' cottages, generally arranged on three sides of a square facing the entrance, and perhaps several nice shady trees will be left in the square for the cattle to shelter themselves under. The rest of the enclosed area will be divided off into paddocks for the young stock, or where the mares can drop their foals, and the cows their calves without being disturbed. Fields for growing grain which will be used for seed are highly manured and better cultivated than the ordinary ground outside, and gardens where the vegetables, herbs and other useful plants are grown. These divisions are also bounded by small hedges on which the shipti or soap plant will be grown. The shipti is a climber, and produces a small round seed which the Abyssinians use instead of soap, it makes a very good lather and cleans all soft cottons and woollen clothes well, rendering them very white, and they also do not shrink and get hard. Its foliage is very dense, and the plant grows very quickly, soon making a hedge that prevents even the largest animal from breaking through. Great attention is paid to the cultivation of barley and wheat for seed purposes, the plant is kept very clean from weeds and the ground thoroughly broken up and liberally supplied with farm manure that is always carefully collected and allowed to rot in pits before it is put on the ground. The seed grain grown is equal to anything I have seen in other parts of the world, and is carefully cleaned from any noxious seeds by being hand-picked by the women. Seed grain always fetches

a much higher price than that used for grinding, and people will come a long distance to purchase it, and in some parts of the country there is a frequent interchange of it from one district to another. This is also done with the potato, as the tubers quickly deteriorate if always planted in the same place.

The farmer in Abyssinia is a well-to-do man and generally very hospitable, and takes a great pleasure in showing one over his property. He lives on the fat of the land and has good meat, good flour of all sorts, and his female belongings make him good bread and cakes, either of wheat, barley, dhurra, tef, both white and red, dagusa (an Abyssinian brownish black grain which makes the best beer, and is also distilled to make a strong white spirit), maize, etc. Pea flour and bean flour are added to the chillies, to make the sauces and chutney always used at every meal. Grain is ground and mixed with tef flour and honey to make sweet cakes. On feast and ordinary days butter is used to cook the dishes, and on fast days as butter is not allowed vegetable oils take its place, they are made from linseed, noug (a hardy yellow flowered plant which is very common throughout the north and gives a small black highly oleaginous seed), and the beautiful Souf, a thistle-like plant with bright orange and red flowers bearing a white seed something like that of the sunflower, which is also very oleaginous. The seed of the Souf is used for many purposes; it is, when dried and pounded, made into sauces, or mixed with honey it makes a kind of almond syrup, a favourite drink with the women and children. The Mahomedans use it for making the sherbet given on feast days or at marriage and other entertainments. The crown in which the Souf seed is carried is identically the same shape as that of a thistle, and just as prickly.

The butter of the country when well made is excellent, the milk is put in a skin and shaken until the butter forms. Churns and cream separators are unknown in Abyssinia, and the same method is employed that was in vogue countless centuries ago.

The flour is ground between two flat stones and necessitates an enormous amount of labour; the pictures found in the ancient ruins of Egypt depict the present means that are in use for turning grain into flour. The larger stone on which the grain is placed is set in a table built up of smaller stones and hard clay, about three feet in height, its top made with a slight incline, the flour when ground falls into a

basket or other receptacle placed at the opposite side from the operator. The rubbing stone has one flat side only, the upper part having a slight ridge so the hands can get a good purchase; these rubbing stones vary in weight from 4 to 5 lbs. for the softer grain, to as much as 10 to 12 lbs. for the harder sorts of corn. Maize and dhurra are generally partly pounded in a pestle and mortar before being put on the grinding stone.

The women commence their work very often long before daylight and the first sound heard in the early morning is the grating noise of flour making, combined with the monotonous chant of the women repeating the Psalms of David or some prayer to help to enliven their task; sometimes I am sorry to say the young ladies will sing lighter sorts of songs that will not bear translation. The oil seeds are all pounded in a large mortar made of some hard close grained wood that will not absorb the oil, the rammer, being also made of hard wood, is about five feet in length. The mortar is made out of a trunk of a tree and hollowed out to a depth of about eighteen inches, the bottom being slightly cup shaped, from the lower part of which a hole is bored to the outside to allow the oil to escape, the whole operation is very tedious and a large amount of labour is expended to produce a very little oil. The liquid obtained from the seed has to be clarified before using, the residue is pressed by the hand to get as much of the oil out as possible and the finer part of the residue is used for various culinary purposes, and the coarser part given to the favourite milch cows or the young stock. The women folk belonging to the farmer's household are busy at work from early morning to late in the evening, and have little or no spare time on their hands. Flour grinding, butter and oil making, brewing the tedj or hydromel and making the beer either out of barley or dagusa, preparing the daily meals, tanning skins, washing clothes, picking the raw cotton from the seeds, and spinning into threads preparatory to sending it to the weavers; going to the weekly adjacent market with farm produce which they either sell or barter, field labour such as weeding the crops or helping in the harvest field, serves to pass their time from day to day throughout the year.

Amusements they have none worth speaking about, the weekly market serves for a day's outing where they hear the gossip and scandal of the neighbourhood and perhaps the news of any stirring event in the country, which perhaps has

grown in importance by being re-told by so many people until the original tale can hardly be recognised in the form it reaches them. Mrs So-and-so, an old acquaintance in in some far off village, has had a baby, a boy or a girl, and perhaps by the time the news reaches this village she has had both or perhaps three. Miss Desta or Miss Miriam is going to be married to Mr Hagos or Mr Welda Gorgis, and some young lady who was sweet on the same young man will make nasty remarks. Some other pretty young lady has run away to the coast to better herself, and the group of females will remark what a lucky young person she is to have got the chance, and that she will soon be back with plenty of money, real gold and silver, jewellery and nice clothes, and then all the best men of the countryside will be after the odious wretch, and until she makes her choice no attention will be paid to them. They will go back home and tell their female relations, and the news of the market will be again discussed and added to by Sunday morning when the gossips congregate under the trees in the churchyard. The Abyssinian females are just as fond of gossip as their sisters in other parts of the world, and human nature in my experience is very nearly the same everywhere be it white, red, brown or black.

If the farmer is a fairly rich man, his wife and perhaps his daughters will not do very hard work, but only superintend the household. They may be able to read and write, having learnt to do so from some priest, who pays a daily visit to the house, and they will pass part of the day in reading the Scriptures, Gospel and Psalms of David, or any of the scanty stock of the country's literature. The rest of the day will be spent in giving a general supervision over the female servants and perhaps helping to prepare the better sorts of bread and cakes which require a light hand, and favourite stews of meat or chicken for their male relations. They perfectly understand the utility of "feeding the beast" with a nice dinner to keep him good-tempered, and what I have seen of many of these young ladies they do everything they possibly can to make a man happy, and being good-tempered, jolly girls they seldom "nag," and no wonder the southern Italians have taken a liking for them, and find themselves perfectly happy in their society. When they have superintended the cooking work they will occupy themselves with embroidery, generally in floss silk on native made cotton which they turn into cuffs, collars,

and pieces for stripes and edgings for the outer shirt and trousers.

The dress that they use on feast days or on any grand occasion consists of a long undershirt reaching to the knees, made of home-grown cotton, cleaned, spun, and woven perhaps on the premises. The cloth is beautifully made and very soft and warm. A pair of trousers, very roomy above and fitting tight at the ankle and calf, in shape not at all unlike the pictures of the hunting-breeches in the *Field* or other papers ; they are usually made of a stronger cloth, but equally soft and warm. The lowest part of the trousers is covered with the embroidery and fastened tight to the leg by a row of small, round, silver buttons. The outer seams on either leg have also a stripe of embroidery about two or three inches broad, generally ending with a large eight-pointed cross. The breeches are fastened round the waist with a silk cord, the same as pyjamas are secured, and the tassels of which are often handsomely decorated with silver ornaments. The inner light shirt is tucked into the trousers, and over all is worn a cotton smock reaching to a little below the knees, made of the same soft material but slightly heavier, and is richly decorated round the collar, shoulders, back, front and wrists, also the lower edge, with the native-made embroidery; the chief colours employed in the work being crimson, dark blue and black, or the national colours of red, yellow and green.

The married women wear round the head a black silk or party-coloured handkerchief which is tied behind, and from it the many little tails of the plaited hair escape ; the unmarried girls have their hair generally very short and wavy, and wear one or two gold or silver hairpins ; their other jewellery consists of little button ear-rings and three little stars, generally made of silver gilt, that are strung on a thread of dark blue silk and are placed on either temple and in the centre of the forehead just where the hair commences. Silver bangles and heavy silver gilt bracelets on the wrist and ankle, bangles and anklets of the same material on each leg. Round the neck is always worn the blue silk cord (all Abyssinians wear this, as it denotes that they are of the Christian religion) to which is generally attached a crucifix, sometimes made of silver, and a few charms or amulets, and silver or gold necklaces of old Byzantine pattern. The fingers will be covered with many silver rings, either perfectly plain or of a beaded pattern, and very often all the toes as well.

The clothes worn are not at all ungraceful, and when clean look very well. It is a dress that gives absolute freedom to the limbs and body, and might be copied by some of the he-women that rush about England on bicycles, as it is a great improvement on the hideous and unladylike dress worn by them. The women in Abyssinia are very fond of strong scents which, as a rule, take the form of oils and are all imported, none being made in the country; they chiefly consist of those that come from India or Ceylon, such as lemon grass, rose, nutmeg, cinnamon oils, etc. Some of the Galla women use civet, and they smell like the small cat house in the Zoological Gardens. Nearly all the lower class Abyssinian women use oil or fat for their heads; this they do to keep the small parasites quiet, as they cannot get about when the head and hair are thickly besmeared and saturated, and the oil or fat also serves for softening the skin of the face and preventing it from chapping in the cold weather, or blistering during the hot season of the year. When they go to the coast they soon lose this custom, nor do they resort to it on their return.

When the women leave the house to go to market or church on Sundays and the great festival days, they always wear one of the native cotton shammas, which have a broad red stripe down the centre. These covers are all home-made with the exception of the thread for the red part, which is made of English Turkey-red twist. They are generally worn like a toga, and one shoulder is left uncovered. A native sunshade used always to be carried, but now nearly everyone has an umbrella. These sunshades could not be folded up and were made of neatly plaited grass of different colours and looked extremely well; they were about two feet to two feet and a half in diameter. The pattern of the umbrellas that are imported are gaudy in the extreme, and give a lively rainbow colouring to the groups congregated in the churchyards or market-places.

The dress of the men varies greatly; the peasant and the poor class wear loose drawers extending to just under the knee, where they fit tight and are gathered round the waist by a thong or belt; a loose shirt is about the only other clothes worn, with the exception of a cape made of a tanned sheep or goat skin with the hair left on. Those who can afford one of the national red and white shammas wear one on holidays. The Abyssinian is beginning to take

to European clothes on the upper part of his body, such as shirts, coats and waistcoats, but as yet he has not adopted the lower garments, and in the transition change he looks a curious and grotesque object. European hats are getting very common, and are generally of the bowler, wideawake or Terai patterns, and have nearly superseded the straw and grass made hats of the nearly identical European shape. Some of the women still wear these straw hats, and when nicely made and placed jauntily on a well-shaped head and shading a pretty face do not look at all bad.

The king, princes, and chief men of the country dress nearly alike, and the description of one of their dresses will suffice for all; of course on grand occasions they will wear highly decorated satins, silks, and embroidered damask of European or Indian make, and fur tippets made of the lion's mane or leopard's skin, that of the black leopard being most liked. The drawers will be rather larger and of better quality than those worn by the lower classes, and will be made of the best Manchester shirtings and fit tightly to the calf of the leg, which they entirely cover. If worn by a rich man the ends will very likely be embroidered in black, white, or coloured thread. Next to the body will be a cotton or flannel shirt, either of native or European make, tucked into the drawers; over this a cotton or cloth jacket coming some way below the waist; and over all a long loose cloth cloak without arms and fastened in front by a button or silver brooch. These cloaks are generally black and made of European stuff, silk, satin, alpaca or broadcloth. They are often handsomely worked and embroidered, and some of them cost a lot of money. Constantinople, Jerusalem, or the Levant ports being the places where they mostly come from.

No Abyssinian in the country has taken to boots, shoes or stockings, although they will hamper their feet with them when they reach the coast. They all go about barefooted; consequently their feet, although small and well shaped, showing no sign of negro heel, are generally knocked about and blemished, and those that ride much have a large big toe development. The stirrup used is very small and only large enough to hold the big toe, and if they wore shoes or boots of course they would have to be larger; the Abyssinian is very conservative in his ideas, so perhaps there will be no change until some king sets the example by wearing boots, and then a larger stirrup will be the fashion. Many

of the ladies who have been abroad wear slippers, and the French merchants are trying to dress the ladies in high-heeled Parisian boots and other French garments such as gaudy corsets; however, they do not seem to be popular as yet. It is a pity when Africans take to European clothes, as they lose their individuality and are at best a poor imitation of the white man, and I always think a native of British India in a high silk hat is a painful sight.

King Johannes used to wear his hair plaited in the Abyssinian style with a splendid gold pin in it, used when necessary, and the only covering to his head when he went out of doors was a black silk handkerchief, and to protect him from the sun or rain, an attendant used to hold a black silk umbrella over him on ordinary occasions, and a red silk one on state. Ras Mangesha, his illegitimate son, does the same, but the present king wears his hair cut short, and uses his fingers to scratch his head, and sports a two shilling black wideawake, and he does not look nearly so characteristic or Abyssinian as his predecessor.

Some of the men in northern Abyssinia look particularly well when they are dressed in new clothes, and could not improve on their loose-fitting and graceful garments, and I hope it will be a long time before they Europeanise themselves. I remember when many of the Egyptians used to wear the old Arab dress and a turban, which they have now discarded for the Stambuli frock-coat and the tarbush, and the change is not for the better.

The Abyssinian children, the moment they grow big enough to wear clothes, dress the same as their parents, only of course in smaller sized garments; before they reach that age they wear but little: a plain little shirt being their only covering. They are merry, jolly little things, and as a rule well behaved; shy to commence with, and some at first being frightened of white people, but no more so, perhaps, than English children would be of a black man, if they came across one in the country. The wildest and shiest have had the greatest confidence in me in the space of an hour. On first meeting me, they have fled screaming to their cottages, crying out: "Mother, come and see this horrible red thing," and then when once they have gained shelter, peeping out behind the door or in safety from their mother's skirts. A piece of sugar or a sweet biscuit lays the foundation of friendship, and they soon grow bold enough to come quite close, and perhaps those more brave than the others will put

out a little hand to be shaken, snatching it away again as soon as they have touched one's fingers. I have got on with the children very well, and found them most amusing, and in a short time, if one is camping for several days near a village, they will as soon as it gets light bring fresh milk, eggs, chickens and vegetables for sale, and they are keen bargainers. I never found them steal anything, and I never missed the smallest or most insignificant article, even an empty jam pot, bottle or tin has never been taken without permission.

I know of no race of children that are so sharp and intelligent, and much might be done with the present rising generation to gain a friendship. Children that I have known on my former visits to the country have grown up when I last visited it, and they have remembered me, saying: "You were here so many years ago, and you used to give me biscuits and sweets, and you used to go out shooting and kill the birds flying, which only the Englishmen do: other men shoot birds on the ground." They seem to have retentive memories, and do not forget incidents of their childhood.

Amusements they have very few of, but they would no doubt soon take to outdoor games, such as cricket and football. Hockey seems to be a favourite with full grown lads and boys. A sort of game like trap bat and ball is common, only played with the hand for a bat, the ball being struck with the open palm; the trap consisting of a stone which has to be hit with the ball after the fielders stop it; or if the ball is caught before it strikes the ground, the player is out. They cheat and fight over this game just as much as English schoolboys do. Hockey is played on a very large scale; one village will play against another, and they may be a mile or two miles apart; the ball is started about equidistant, and the object of the game is to drive the ball into the adversary's village. Perhaps forty or fifty children of all sizes will be engaged in each team, and the very smallest can help, as there is no such thing as off side, and perhaps the smallest boy of all will make the winning hit for his side, as the ball may be struck close to him, and he will be enabled to get his stroke in before a bigger boy can prevent him. This game is played on the roughest ground, and in bush and long grass, and must be capital exercise. The ball used is generally made of india-rubber procured in the country. I have never seen a kite flown in Abyssinia, or any of the quiet amusements except knuckle bones, which I believe is played all over the world.

Wrestling takes place, but striking with the hands or boxing is not resorted to; when the boys fight amongst themselves they generally close and wrestle, and when they fall to the ground they will scratch, bite, kick, and pull each other's hair, and the vanquished will generally, when they come apart, get hold of a stone and threaten all sorts of things but seldom throws it, if he does, it is generally at the lower part of the leg and not at the head. They are passionate, but not what one could call bad-tempered, and they are seldom what could be called sulky or vindictive; and their quarrels are like April showers and soon pass away. Ten minutes after two boys have fought they may be seen walking together with their arms round each other the best of friends. They are perfectly fearless with animals, and will catch and mount the horses and mules that are grazing in the open and gallop them about bare-backed and without a halter and laugh when one of them gets thrown.

The out-door life they lead, despite their bad sanitary houses, makes those that survive hardy and active, and it is no wonder that they make splendid fighting material. One of their favourite amusements is playing at soldiers; one party is chosen against another, the one hides in the bush and among the rocks, and the other party will go out to find them. They arm themselves with sham swords made of wood, lances from some long reed and a shield of wicker-work made out of rushes. I have often watched these sham battles quite closely, and have been hit by a reed thrown by some little rascal hidden in the grass, who has laughed when it has struck me. They show a great deal of intelligence and strategy when they scout, and get up tall trees to try and find the whereabouts of their supposed enemy. They are merry, jolly little souls, but it is a pity that they are not kept cleaner, but what semi-wild children are not dirty? Their mothers never say—like English ones do—"Tommy, come in out of the dirt or I will smack you, you are spoiling your new clothes." The Abyssinian small child has no clothes to spoil except about twice a year on some great festival when he gets a new shirt, and I am sure he tries his hardest to keep it clean for the first few hours until some little accident happens, and then if it is a little dirty it might become altogether so, and by night time there may be one or two white spots left. Collectors of natural history objects will find these small boys most useful, as they know where everything is to be found; birds' nests and all; they are not

particularly careful with the specimens, and will bring in a butterfly with part of a wing only, or a beetle squashed nearly flat or minus all its legs; however, they mean well, and soon can be entrusted with a butterfly net or a collecting-box.

Snakes or harmless lizards they generally mangle in a terrible manner and will never touch them with their hands, so they are brought in impaled on some stick, and small children who perhaps have never seen a live snake will show just as much fear of it as a monkey will, another proof of Darwin's theory. I shall never forget the awe of a small group of these boys when I caught a large green-grass snake with my hands and a short stick, and showed them the inside of its mouth, and that it had no fangs, and told them it was perfectly harmless and a most useful reptile, as it fed on locusts and other insects, and I then let it go. Chamelions that are very common in Abyssinia they have all a great dread of, as they say they spit poison at people, and that they are very deadly. They used to tell me that if one watched them changing colour that blindness was certain to take place. I always used to catch and handle the chamelions and put them in my tent, as it was most amusing to watch them catching flies and insects and changing their colours, perfectly green at one moment when on the Willesden canvas tent and brown when on the brown blankets of my bed; at last the children got to believe that they were harmless. It is entirely the fault of the priests that all these vulgar superstitions are kept up, and they teach the children that the snake is a real devil and the lizard one of his satellites; they are therefore ruthlessly killed on every opportunity. I was very much amused on one occasion with a priest. I was sitting at the roadside surrounded by my servant and a lot of small children examining an adder (one of the brown marble coloured, like that so common in the Soudan) and explaining to them the fangs and poison sac when the priest came up, and the moment he saw the snake he pulled out his cross and held it in front of him and began telling the children that it was the devil. I threw it in the air and it nearly fell on the top of him, and he was off down the road like a shot, saying all sorts of things about strangers teaching children to be disobedient and I, by retorting about priests, who ought to know better than telling children lies.

The childhood of these manly little boys is a short one, as they soon have to help their fathers earn their daily bread

in the fields, and then life becomes one hard routine of work to keep the wolf from the door and to satisfy the tax gatherer and rapacious soldiery on their sometimes frequent visits to the village. How soon the younger generation would take to a good and just government that only levied a fixed taxation, and what a future there is for this country when it is opened up and the people are able to reap the fruits of their labour; there can be no deterioration in their physique as long as they follow their open-air and active life, and once the country was in the hands of a European government, there would not be the constant revolutions, and one part of the kingdom striving against another part just to allow some bigoted worthless ruler to be master of all.

A word about the small Abyssinian girls will not be out of place, and I am sure will prove interesting; they are not at all unlike their little white sisters, and some of them are just as pretty, pert and cheeky little beings as found in English nurseries, but are studies in light brown and brown instead of in pink and white; their life is a much quieter one than that of their brothers, and they seldom go far from the house, and as soon as they are old enough to help their mothers, they do light work such as pulling the cotton wool from the pods and taking out the seed or picking over the wheat and barley or other grain before it is ground and made into flour. They will go out and collect sticks for the fire, and even when they are tiny little mites will go to the streams to fetch water, carrying the heavy water-pots on their backs or balanced on the head. By carrying these heavy weights at an early age they get good figures and hold themselves very upright. Amusements they have none, and they have no toys, except it may be a make-belief dolly made of some dirty old rags. I have seen them make mud pies like other children, and playing with the kittens and puppies or looking after the young chickens and the kids and lambs when their mothers are away in the daytime grazing on the hillside.

They marry at an early age, fourteen or fifteen, but they do not develop as soon in this cold climate as they do in India and the East. The change from the parent's house brings no relaxation of work, on the contrary, their life is a harder one, as they have to do the whole work of the house and also some of the field-work. The majority of them are getting old between twenty-five and thirty, and after that age, what with the incessant round of toil from day's end to day's end throughout the year, they look older than a

European woman of double the age. The upper classes keep their good looks longer, but at thirty-five they are entirely *passé*, their profiles alone being good; some of them make handsome old ladies, while others are perfect old witch-like hags at fifty. They are, as a rule, industrious, hard-working and good-tempered, ever ready to do a good action, and they certainly make good wives when they once settle down. They are not more immoral that the women of other countries, but there is a certain laxness before they are married which is thought nothing of, but they are true after the marriage ceremony has been performed in church and the sacrament has been taken together. They will look out after their husband's children, legitimate or illegitimate, the same as their own, but it is only natural that they should prefer the ones they have borne themselves and take the most care of them. Their great drawback is their dirtiness, but all those that get the chance of being clean keep themselves very neat and tidy, and many of them make good domestic servants, first-rate cooks, laundresses and dressmakers.

The Abyssinian women have always been great favourites with the Turks, Egyptians, Armenians, and many of the Levantine races. Many of the officials in Turkey, Egypt, and Arabia have been the offspring of Abyssinian women. The cross between the Abyssinian and European, and the Abyssinian and Levantine races show no signs of deterioration, as far as I have seen. Many of the children are much finer and better-looking than the ordinary male Abyssinian, and they grow into fine strong athletic men, and are intelligent and clever, soon picking up languages or trades of all sorts. The women are also handsomer and quicker at learning than their mothers, and in features and colour could very well be taken for inhabitants of Southern Europe.

The cross between this Semitic race and the Caucasian has not the great objections as that of the Caucasian with the negro; the offspring from these two is a grave mistake, as the racial fœtor of the negro never thoroughly dies out, and even the character of the progeny, although it may be slightly better than that of the true negro, often shows great vindictiveness and moroseness, and many other bad qualities. Here also in Abyssinia the cross between the Semitic race and the negro is not a success, and I should have no hesitation in saying that the majority of the criminals and the more lawless of the population belong to this class, and the cruelty of some of the rulers may be accounted for by

a mixture of negro blood, perhaps three or four or more generations ago. It is a most interesting question, and may take several generations to decide, what the future of the present cross that is growing up will turn out, and whether a true bred Caucasian and Semitic will, in this instance, be a success or not; all those that I have seen, both male and female, perhaps two to three hundred in all, are improvements and not deteriorations. I could give many examples, but they shall be nameless, as their English and Italian fathers, or the families of their fathers, might not care about the names appearing in print.

CHAPTER XI

AGRICULTURE AND DOMESTIC ANIMALS

THERE is perhaps no part of Africa that can equal Abyssinia as an agricultural country and its inhabitants must have lived for countless ages as tillers of the soil. No modern ideas of farming or cultivation have ever been introduced, and here can be found the same methods of cultivating the land as must have existed since the human being first gained his existence in the grain fields by the sweat of his brow.

If we look at the pictures found in the ancient tombs of Egypt, that deal with the subject of agriculture, or turn to the ruins of Babylon, we find exactly the same methods of cultivating the soil employed in these bygone ages as exists at the present moment in the highlands of Abyssinia. The plough is of the same form, the yoke that attached the animal to the plough is of the same shape, and the whip to urge them on exactly similar. For hand labour in breaking up the earth, the hoe now used has not altered in the least from those that were formerly manufactured, and we have no doubt, in Abyssinia, an example of what the cultivation of the soil has been since the earliest epoch of civilisation.

Some parts of the Galla countries, especially in the Harar province, are no doubt more backward, and more primitive in the means employed than in Abyssinia, and here can be found instruments for breaking up the earth entirely manufactured of wood, others of wood and stone, and if the villages of whole districts were searched, hardly a dozen iron hoes or plough-shares could be mustered, and those perhaps belonging to people who have travelled or settled in the country from other districts. The plough is made of a nearly semi-circular piece of mimosa tree or other suitable tough wood, and in the centre of the curve a hole is bored, and two flat supports are placed on either side, made of the same wood; between these supports is placed the iron plough-share, and

they are all bound together to the shaft with raw hide, at an angle of about twenty degrees.

The yoke is also joined to one end of the shaft by raw hide, and consists of a straight piece of wood about five feet in length, and bored with four holes to contain the ends of the collar of bent wood which attaches the animals to the yoke. In ground which is hard to break up, a heavy stone is bound on to the upper side of the lower part of the semi-circular bit of wood, just above the ploughshare, to make it do its work. The plough is kept in position by the plough-man with one hand, and the other hand is used for the whip, which has a handle of about two feet in length, with a thong made of plaited fibre or leather of about seven to eight feet.

The iron hoes vary in size, from light ones weighing about 2 lbs., to the heavier sorts weighing as much as 8 lbs. They are in shape like the ace of spades, and are fitted into holes in wooden handles, and firmly tied by raw hide. With these two instruments, nearly the whole of the soil in the northern part of Abyssinia is cultivated. In southern Abyssinia, and in the Galla countries, the peasants use a trident-shaped tool, about eight feet long, made of any heavy hard wood, the three prongs of the trident being sometimes shod with iron when obtainable; this is plunged into the hard black soil, and a piece of ground some two feet square is raised up and turned over. When the plot of ground is finished, the men break up the pieces of earth with a heavy mallet made of stone. Many stones with holes completely through them are to be obtained in the country, and a handle is fitted in them and they are then fit for use.

The seed bed is then partly levelled down, and planted with whatever crop they want. Sometimes the blocks of earth which are raised up are over a foot in thickness, and if the cultivators think that the richness of the soil in them is exhausted, they are stacked in a heap or used to make a wall round the fields, and the underneath soil is used as the seed bed. These stacks of soil are full of the roots of former crops, couch grass and weeds; other weeds and dried vegetation are collected and stacked with them and allowed to remain till the harvest is finished, when they are burnt; and what with the purifying heat of the sun and the vegetable ash, the soil becomes sweet and good and regains its fertility, and is again spread over the fields before the next crop is planted. Where these heaps have been, can always be seen by a richer growth of the crop. In some soils in the south,

the trident instrument is used before ploughing is resorted to, owing to the primitive and weak plough, which hardly scratches the upper surface; it is only after heavy rains that the ploughshare will do its work. In the north, perhaps, the farming is a great deal superior to that of the south; rotation of crops is better understood, and there being such a lot of ground that can be cultivated, fields have a longer rest; some ground is allowed to lie idle for a couple of years, and by that time it is covered with a thick jungle vegetation, which has to be cut down and burnt before the field is again used for cultivation.

The first crop grown on this fresh recultivated land is generally dhurra (*holcus sorghum*), as the seed bed does not require such a thorough preparation, and the roots and stems of the dhurra when burnt also make fair manure. The roots of the dhurra also tend to break the soil into fine particles, and make the land easier to plough, and as the roots sink to no great depth, they do not exhaust the under soil.

Ploughing in the north is not like what our farmers in England are accustomed to, and very few fields are ever seen in long ridge and furrow. The man directs his instrument at haphazard all over the field, thoroughly breaking up the surface of the soil, and leaving if possible no big clod of earth. If the fields are very stony, after the first ploughing they are collected in heaps, or if the field slants to any great extent and a wash from the rain is feared, they are put in lines across the field at right angles to the slope; when this work is completed, the field is again reploughed and made ready to receive the seed, which is generally planted in early June, so as to be ready for the rainy season, which commences about the middle of June, sometimes a few days before or after the 15th, according to whether the rains are early or late. Near the big towns of the north, where labour is very plentiful and there are many women and children, farming has arrived at a very high state of perfection; hedges kept in good order; ditches kept clear, so the water after the frequent and heavy rains shall run away to the streams quickly and not make the fields sodden; weeding is carefully attended to, and the women and small children spend daily many hours in the fields, removing the weeds by hand from amongst the growing grain.

Near these towns, of course, ground is more valuable, and it is very seldom that the fields are allowed to remain long in fallow; therefore manure has to be used, and this is care-

fully collected and stored. Unfortunately it is placed like in Ireland, just under the house window, and the smell, therefore, is far from pleasant. Carts are unknown, so it has all to be carried to the fields by the people in small baskets or on donkey back, entailing an enormous amount of labour. Immediately the crops are cut, which is done by knives or small sickles made by the village blacksmiths, the cattle, consisting of cows, sheep and goats, are turned into the stubbles to graze on the undergrowth of grass and small herbs that have grown up in spite of all the weeding.

The date of the harvest depends on what part of the country one is in, and its altitude above the sea. Considering some of the cultivated plateaux are not more than 3000 feet above the sea, naturally the crops ripen a great deal sooner than they do on those plateaux that have an altitude of 10,000 feet, and in some parts of the country a little more than a day's journey will take one from autumn back to summer, spring and winter, and from tropical to sub-tropical and European climate, according to height. The crops of wheat, barley, dhurra, maize, tef, dagusa, beans of all sorts, peas of many different kinds, grain, lentils, linseed, and other oil seeds, which form the chief field crops grown, begin to get ripe at the end of September, and the first harvest is over by the end of November or early December.

The barley amongst the grains is the first to ripen, followed by the dhurra and wheat; the moment these fields have been cleared, and the undergrowth has been fed down by the cattle, they are again broken up and a pea, grain, or bean crop grown, which is very often ready to harvest before some of the other crops are ripe. So fertile is the ground, that another barley crop will be sown after these, and if there are good winter rains, will be ripe by the end of March or commencement of April, making three crops off some fields in the twelve months. It is only in part of April, May, and the commencement of June, that the country looks at its worst, and as if it was a burnt-up, barren land, as there is very little colour in the landscape, except browns and reds of all shades, or where the water meadows are situated in the lower parts of the valleys. At this period some travellers and military men have visited the country, and not being of an observant nature have reported unfavourably on it.

There is nothing done in the way of carrying crops, and no such festivals as take place in other countries, with the

bringing in of the last load. The crops are cut and cocked or stacked in the fields where they are grown, and as it is generally fine weather without any rain, they are not covered up. The grain is trodden out by animals; the oxen, horses, and mules being employed to do the work. There are very seldom any proper floors prepared, but a simple circle of stones made round a piece of ground about twenty yards in diameter; and as soon as the crop is cut, the grain is arranged in the circle with the ears pointing towards the centre, and the animals generally tied four abreast, sometimes more, are turned in the circle to tread out the corn. The animals are ridden by the small children, who seem to thoroughly enjoy harvest work. While this work is going on, the Abyssinian as a rule sleeps near his threshing floor, and the country side is dotted with fires; this is about the only time of the year that the Abyssinian sleeps out of doors. In some parts of the country, however, a little away from the main roads, where the people are not frightened of travellers or tramps stealing the grain, it is left without watchers, and in my travels I have often come across these heaps of half-cleaned grain left without a watchman. Many an evening I have camped with the peasant at his threshing floor, and sat long into the night talking with him round his fire under the bright moonlight, when the stars look so unnaturally large in the dark heavens, owing to the clearness of the atmosphere. Nature then is very still, and the only sounds that can be heard is the occasional bark of the fox, the jackal's weird cry, or some old hyena calling to its mate, and if he approaches too near the villages, the dogs assemble and drive him off with their yelping.

One finds out a great deal more of the people of the country if one enters into conversation with them at all times, and sympathises with them in their little troubles and the work they have to do. I have never regretted my time spent with them, either in their houses or in the field, but I object to their dirty houses and their insects. A man may travel for years on the high roads of Abyssinia and stop with king or prince, and never come to know anything properly of the inhabitants and the peasantry who make up the large majority of the country, and thus form a most erroneous opinion on what the country wants.

The king, the prince, and the baron all require one thing, and they are few in number, and the peasants (or yeomanry of the country), who are the most numerous, require another,

and object to keep the upper classes in idleness, and perhaps to lose the result of their labour in a quarrel which does not interest them in the slightest.

The winnowing of the grain is also done in the fields, and only consists of throwing the grain in small quantities in the air, so the husks can be blown away by the wind ; it is then put into baskets made of rushes or into sacks made of fibre and taken to the villages, where it is stored in large wicker-work receptacles which are plastered with clay to prevent the rats and mice eating the grain, or in underground pits which have been thoroughly dried and their sides well lined with a kind of cement made out of the white ant mounds ; these pits are then covered up with two to three feet of earth and, so as to effectually hide them, some small garden produce is grown over the ground, and the only way that they can be discovered is by sounding. Grain in these pits will keep a long time if it is put in when it is quite dry and ripe ; if it is put in in a damp state it soon mildews and spoils. The heads of the dhurra and the maize are plucked when ripe, and the grain is detached by beating it with a flat stick ; this work is performed by the women and children in the houses or enclosures round them, and not in the fields.

The peasant, before the cattle plague broke out, was in a much better position than he is now ; as at the end of every season he had a large surplus stock of grain, as with his several pairs of oxen he could cultivate more ground than he does at present. I can remember the time in Abyssinia when grain used to be remarkably cheap, good wheat and barley selling in some places for less than an English sovereign per ton of 20 cwts., and there is no reason after a series of good years why this should not again take place.

In parts of Abyssinia the land during the dry season is irrigated, and the system of irrigation is not at all unlike that employed by the Ceylon natives. The terrace irrigation entails a lot of hard work. The water is taken from some spring in the mountains, and directed to the upper terrace on the hillside in small channels roughly built of stone and clay. The terraces are built up of stones taken from the fields, and of course vary in height and width according to the nature of the hill which is being cultivated ; they may be from two to six feet above one another, and they gradually decrease in breadth the further they get up the hill. Great care is taken during the rainy season to keep waterways open and sufficiently large enough to carry off any sudden rush of

water, and the channels that are used for irrigating the fields in the dry season are made use of as ditches, to carry the water into the natural bed of the drainage. In making use of the rivers for irrigating purposes, a deep and therefore smooth water stretch is chosen to take the water from, and the channels are often miles in length and led along at the foot of the hills, so the sloping sides of the valleys between the hills and their lowest levels may be watered when required. The amount of labour expended on the system is often very great, and one cannot help admiring the natives for their ingenuity and the hard work that has to be done every year to keep the small water courses in order.

Very often the soldiers when they are on the march and cannot procure supplies from the natives, break down the slight banks of the channels, and in a few minutes destroy the labour of perhaps many days. Knowing what will happen if they do not give supplies the peasants are more easily imposed upon, and the soldiers, when going through a country that depends upon irrigation for the summer crops, always demand more from the people than in other places.

The tenth of the produce of the soil goes to the king or the ruler of the province; and this tax is not such a heavy one to be borne, but the collector of the tax wants something for himself, and the soldiers also have to have provisions given them, and officials with their servants travelling to and from the chief towns also have to receive free rations from the villages, so if there is any great movement in the country, or wars or rumours of wars and large forces of soldiers on foot there is no end to the taxation, and the villagers on the line of march and in its neighbourhood are eaten out of house and home, and are left in a most miserable condition.

Supposing, for an example, a chief of the north should be considered by the king to be contumacious or a small dispute between them arise, a force is immediately sent off to bring him to order. This force has to be fed on its way there and back, and is quartered perhaps as a punishment for some time in the territory of the chief who has had the difference on some slight matter with the king. Not only do the subjects of the individual who has had the dispute suffer, but the peasantry of the whole districts through which the force passes; and on the return the officer in command will take great care that he does not follow the same route by which he came, as he will put a fresh district under contribution; and if he does not require food he will demand it

all the same, and then compromise the requisition for half its value in coin. This is how the courtiers and soldiers of fortune that are always found in the vicinity of the palaces of the great men make their living, and how the chief of my escort from Macalle to Adese-Ababa enriched himself *en route*, and doubtless did the same thing on his return as well.

From these exactions it will be seen that farming and cultivating in Abyssinia has its drawbacks, and the cultivators have to put more ground under crops than what they otherwise would have to do if they only had to feed themselves and pay only the ten per cent. tax.

It is impossible for this state of affairs to continue for many years more, as the peasants are beginning to know too much, and are better armed than formerly; when the regular soldier only had firearms, a few of them could overawe a large district; now soldier and peasantry, owing to the latter having purchased the means to defend himself, are more on an equality. When the Egyptians were in Harar and the north, at Keren, they took every precaution to prevent the inhabitants getting arms; and even now the Abyssinians pursue the same policy with the people round Harar, fearing a rebellion among the Mahomedans. Their method of taxation was the same as employed in Abyssinia, and their tax collectors and bashi-bazuks had an easy task in getting in the taxes and enriching themselves at the same time; but now in the north, thanks to the new policy pursued by Italy in their colony at Erithrea, their peasantry are commencing to be better off than they ever were before, and they can live in better style, build bigger houses, cultivate more land, eat and drink more, keep more cattle and wear better clothes, or in other words, enjoy life with more freedom and perfect security than at any time in their country's history. The consequence is that there is a steady influx of Abyssinians into the colony, and it only wants a little time before the Hamasen and the north will again become one vast grain field, and the population, especially of Tigré and Amhara, will long to enjoy the same privileges.

It is a pity for Italy that she commenced her former movement too quickly, and she has only to persevere with her present policy and she will reap a glorious harvest in future. England having lost the Harar provinces during the time of the power of the "Lesser Englishmen," has no place in the neighbourhood where she can set the natives the same example: namely, allowing them to live in

peace and security under a just government and a light taxation. I have always tried to inculcate these sentiments in the Abyssinian; and several of the leading men, especially Ras Aloula, who was of a good yeoman family himself, and the best soldier perhaps that Abyssinia ever produced, saw the blessings of it, and from 1880 to 1887 the peasants and yeomen in the country which he governed greatly improved their position; and a good house and a full farmyard, with clean clothes and general prosperity, did not entail an increased taxation.

The Abyssinians are not great fruit eaters, and consequently do not take any great pains to cultivate it; many of them that have travelled and some of the upper classes, however, have good fruit gardens, and grow many sorts. The orange thrives well where it is properly looked after; but it is of the kind found in the East, and more like that which comes from Zanzibar than any other. There are several different kinds both of the sweet and sour sort. The lime is common everywhere where the climate is not too cold; it grows most luxuriously and bears very heavy crops, the boughs having to be supported or they would otherwise break with the weight of the fruit. The lemon is met with occasionally, but was evidently imported by the Jesuits or Portuguese in the sixteenth century. The peach and apricot are common in the gardens around the more ancient towns, but they are not particularly large, owing to the want of care in cultivating them; their flavour is however distinctly good. The grape thrives with little attention and dates back to the oldest times, and it is said that in olden days, before the Moslem invasion, wine was made in the country.

The banana in the tropical and sub-tropical valleys is very common, and the fruit most excellent. In some places the native women have a way of preparing it by removing the outer skin and drying it in the sun, and it then gets candied and keeps for a long time. I have never seen this done in any other country. There are many sorts of pumeloes. Several, I believe, are indigenous to the country, and on the base of the obelisks and the sacrifical stones at Axum they are portrayed together with the fig-leaf. Figs are also grown, but they are small and not very good. The paw-paw is found wild in the tropical and sub-tropical valleys, and one kind of this tree grows up to the line of frost and is hardy. Melons are also grown, but are not much cared for. A plum of a dark purple colour has evidently been imported, and is not a native of the country.

The vegetables, of which there is a large assortment, are both indigenous and imported. Among the former is the tomato which in many places grows wild, and there are many sorts to be procured from the large uneven one to the smallest smooth-skinned of the size of a grape. The latter are most delicious. The Abyssinian native doctors say that those that eat tomatoes never suffer from liver. The egg-plant is found in many places in an uncultivated state, and it is also a common garden plant. The Galla cabbage has a growth more like the Scottish kail, and reaches a height of seven or eight feet. Its leaves are greatly used in stews, but it is an insipid vegetable unless properly cooked. The bhamea or "lady's finger" is found everywhere, and both the larger and smaller kinds are excellent and greatly esteemed for mixing with the hot sauces of red pepper used in every Abyssinian household.

Sweet potatoes, yams, and other edible tuberous roots are common. The common potato was re-introduced by Professor Schimper, the German botanist, who lived for so many years in the country, and is now to be found wherever the people from Amhara and Tigré are settled. The Abyssinian potatoes are of many sorts, sizes and shapes, and are quite as good as any that can be raised in Europe. I have never seen the potato-disease, and I daresay our market gardeners might like to procure some of the heavy-cropping varieties that exist, which are of excellent flavour and with thin skins and of pretty shape. The water-cress was also imported by Professor Schimper, and it is now to be found in nearly every brook and quiet stream in the northern part of the country, and I have had on many occasions to thank him for this very wholesome vegetable as an addition to my lunch which very often consisted merely of native bread. Two thin slices of native bread with a crisp fresh cress between is not to be despised by a hungry man.

The pumpkin is largely grown, both for its flesh to eat on fast-days, and seed which is used as a medicine for internal parasites, and the rind for making bowls to contain milk and food. They also grow cucumbers, vegetable marrows of many kinds, calabashes and gourds which are dried and used for the same household purposes as the natives of Africa, India and southern Europe employ them. Some of the gourds are decorated with very tasteful designs, and make rather handsome ornaments. There can be no doubt that the gourd was used as a domestic utensil long before pottery was known.

The red pepper is largely cultivated throughout the whole country wherever the soil and climate is suitable, but the province of Yejju grows more perhaps than any other district, from where it is sent to all parts of the south of Abyssinia. The valleys of the upper waters of the Golima river are nearly entirely devoted to this plant, and many thousands of acres of it are cultivated, the fields being well kept and irrigated by the numerous small streams. Picking goes on more or less the whole year round, and a great feature in the landscape are the large cemented floors on which the crop of scarlet pods is dried. They have to be taken in or heaped up and covered every night to prevent the dew and rain from damping the crop, which soon spoils unless it gets properly dried through, when it will keep for a long time. There are many sorts of chillies cultivated. The hottest is the small red bird's-eye, and next to this is a very large and long red one; the orange and yellow kinds are more like the Nepal pepper and are not so powerful. Red pepper forms the basis of all sauces, and some of them are a great deal too hot for European palates. I have often cried and choked when trying to eat some dish of meat or chicken that has been provided me. The Abyssinian inside must be made of cast iron to withstand the large quantities that they consume; children, before they can walk, are fed on this hot stuff and seem to thrive well on it. The Tobasco sauce, which I should think is the strongest that is sold in England, is quite cool compared to some that is used in Abyssinia, and Mr Schimper, son of the Professor, who travelled with me, used to take a big table-spoonful of Tobasco with his curry and say it was not what he called strong. Half-a-dozen drops of it are enough for me.

Cotton in small quantities is grown in nearly every province; the staple is good, of fair length and very strong, and in many places quite as good as the Egyptian. Enough is grown for home consumption only, and all the shammas or the Abyssinian national dress are made from this country-grown cotton. There is plenty of suitable ground in Abyssinia that would give large crops of this staple, but up till now it is not exported.

Coffee is grown in the south, south-east and south-west, and a little in the central provinces, and is largely exported from Abyssinia. It is known in England and on the continent as Mocha long berry. It is not largely consumed in the country except by the Mahomedans, and wherever they are

found a few trees are grown in their gardens even in the north. Some of the best coffee trees that I have seen in Abyssinia were at Abbi-Addi in the Tembien province. The bushes are mostly grown in terraced gardens or in some alluvial flat in the valleys, which only gets inundated to the extent of about a foot. To prevent the trees being uprooted heavy stones are placed on the ground round the stems to break the force of the water; a little space is left between each stone so that the water can reach the roots, and also a certain amount of fresh deposit that is brought down by every flood. Round Harar the coffee trees are not irrigated like in some districts, and the trees lose the majority of their leaves during the dry season. Pruning is little resorted to, and the bushes are allowed to grow to a height of nine or ten feet, which makes it difficult to pick the crop; the trees are also placed too close together. In the garden I mentioned at Abbi-Addi, one of the Abyssinians had been to India and seen coffee growing there; he had topped his coffee at about six to seven feet and had cleared out the bushes when they had got too crowded, and he had a splendid crop, I never saw a better one even in the palmy days of coffee planting in Ceylon. They have not had the coffee disease in Abyssinia so far. The industry is entirely in its infancy, and hereafter, no doubt, a very fair living might be made in this country at coffee planting, labour being so easily and cheaply procured and the cost of food so trifling.

The "geshu," a plant that is used in the making of tedj or hydromel, the national drink, is also largely cultivated. It is, I think, of the laurel tribe, as it is an evergreen, never entirely losing its leaves. It has an insignificant little flower and the leaves have but little taste, but when added to the honey and water, of which tedj is made, it has a soporific effect on most Europeans when some of the liquid is taken, and on some people and nearly to all the Abyssinians it is an intoxicant. The safflower is grown in some parts of the country, and other dyes are found growing wild; these plants are preserved and not cut down when clearing the ground for cultivating.

The cattle in Abyssinia are, in spite of want of attention, very fine animals and of many different kinds, and no doubt with careful selection many of the breeds might be greatly improved. They mostly take after the Zebu or humped description usually found throughout Africa and the East, but there are also two kinds, one a very large one and

another of Jersey size, that show absolutely no trace of an Eastern origin, and are as straight-backed as any English short-horn. The larger one of the two is found on the very high plateaux of Wollo and northern Shoa, and is nearly always of a black or dark red colour. It has short stumpy horns, a close-haired smooth coat, straight back, heavy shoulders, good ribs, very large barrel, bones of the entire frame very large, low on the leg, a good neck and a fairly small head. They get very fat and as a butcher's animal leave little to be desired. I have never weighed one, but when in the best condition I should think they weighed, judging by our show cattle in England, at least 14 to 16 cwts., and some specimens a good deal more. I believe that if these animals were carefully selected and properly fed when they were young that the breed might be greatly improved and prove very valuable. They are at present entirely grass fed, or given a little tef straw at night-time only, when they are shut in their horrible insanitary houses. The animals are not allowed out till the sun is well up, and they are driven home and housed by six o'clock, so they are only out about ten hours per day, and the rest of their time is spent in an ill-ventilated house with scarcely a mouthful of food. The oxen of this class are very powerful and do hard work from the early hours in the morning till late at night, and the bulls and cows do not work at all. The cows are good milkers, but the milk is not so rich and good as that given by the smaller animals.

The latter are much smaller and lighter boned, and never exceed a live weight of about 5 to 6 cwts. in the best of condition and 4 cwts. would be nearer an average. They are pretty, graceful little animals, with heads not at all unlike the Jersey breed, with similar shaped horns; they are of all colours except purely white, which is very rare—red-browns, duns, creams, brindles, and a smoky colour being the commonest. These animals get very fat and their flesh is excellent, and as they are of an economical size for slaughtering purposes, more are kept than of the larger kind. The oxen of this class are only used for light ploughing work on the hill-sides, where the soil is of a more yielding nature than that in the heavy clay and dark black soil of the valley bottoms.

What strikes a traveller greatly is, that these animals are so quiet, allowing a stranger, even a white man, to handle them with impunity, and they are so tame that they will hardly get out of the way of a horseman. They differ entirely

from the cattle of the low countries, which are shy and sometimes dangerous to people on foot, and I have been charged on several occasions, twice having to use my rifle and killing the animal, which I have had to pay for; the price was not ruinous, as before the cattle plague commenced a bullock could be bought for 10s. and a cow for about double the price.

The Zebu cattle in Abyssinia are exactly the same as those found in other places in Africa and Asia, and may be divided into the large, medium and small breeds; they are all capable of much improvement and no care whatever is taken of them, and they live on what they can pick up; during the hot and dry season they do not get enough food and fall off greatly in condition; then the rains come, and they get alternately drenched and baked by the hot sun, which is liable to bring on colds owing to the sudden rise and fall in temperature. The thermometer will register about 40° during a hail-storm, and an hour afterwards it will be up over 100° with a bright hot sun. The young tender grass which springs up so rapidly after the rains is the only food the cattle get, on which they gorge themselves after perhaps three months of semi-starvation, and the change from the dry food to a wet and juicy one, brings on bowel complaints, and many animals die every year from the effects of the great change of food. The rinderpest which devastated the country was much worse after the rains than before; when an animal was attacked with the complaint it was never isolated from the others, but they were all shut up at night, sick and healthy together, so no wonder the mortality was great. The bodies of the dead animals were never burnt or buried, but allowed to rot on the pastures, defiling the ground and spreading the disease. On several of the high tableland mountains where they had no intercourse with the low country, not an animal died, and the disease seemed to have followed at first along the roads to the different market towns, and then spread from the roads to the surrounding neighbourhood.

The sheep in Abyssinia are of several varieties, the commonest being of the small mountain breed, generally of a red, brown, and black, or a mixture of these three colours. They carry little wool, and are only good for eating purposes, and the ewes are not milked like some of the larger sorts. A good live weight for these animals is from 20 to 30 lbs., and in some parts of Abyssinia I have bought

three or four for a dollar, or an equivalent in English money to 2s. Their flesh is delicious, as they feed on the mountain grass and the sweet herbs that grow on the high lands, such as wild thyme, mint, etc., which gives a peculiar flavour to the mutton, and is very like our Welsh mutton in colour and grain.

The travellers' yarns about men being able to eat a single sheep at a meal can easily be believed when one of these small mountain kind is in question, and I found my four Somali servants could finish one off without any inconvenience, and if they were very hungry I daresay they could have got through two. For a starving man, an Abyssinian mountain sheep is enough for one, but not enough for two, as they say in England with reference to the goose. The mountain sheep has small horns and a short fat tail, while the larger kind has fairly large horns and a good-sized fat tail, but not as large as the Arabian sheep. The larger Abyssinian sheep, as a rule, are not found on any of the highest plateaux, but are kept to the lower and middle elevations. They carry a much thicker fleece than the mountain sheep, and go from 45 lbs. to 60 lbs. live weight. Some, however, that have been made pets of, and fed with grain, will weigh as much as 80 to 100 lbs., and I have seen one when cleaned, and with its head, inside, and skin removed, which weighed 96 lbs. It was very fat, and the flesh was very good, but not nearly of such good flavour as the mountain mutton. These sheep just mentioned may have been the original breed of the country, as they are of different shape to the other sorts, and cross breeds. The black heavy fleeced animals of the Wollo country, that give the wool from which the Wollo Gallas make their tents, blankets, clothes, and overcoats, are exactly similar to the central Arabian animal, and no doubt originally came from there. This sheep is about the size of a South Down, and is nearly always black, very few of them shewing the least sign of any other colour.

The cross breeds are evidently between the sheep from the Danakil country, and from the Soudan, and the Abyssinian ; they are what may be termed hair coated, as the only trace of wool, of very bad quality, is about the shoulder and flank. Their horns and ears are very small, and they have long thin tails, and stand very high on the leg. They are of all colours, generally a white ground with red, black, brown, yellow and brindle spots, and a large flock of these animals

when feeding on the hillside, or in the grass fields, enlivens the landscape greatly. The flesh of these animals is inferior to that of the other breeds.

The ewes of the larger kinds as soon as they have lambed are separated from the young, and are milked regularly every evening, and the lambs are only allowed with their mothers during the night; the young are thus kept without sucking from about seven o'clock in the morning till about the same time at night, and consequently do not thrive as they otherwise would do if always left with their mother. Twin lambs are not nearly as common in this country as in Europe, and triplets are scarcer still.

The wool from all the sheep in Abyssinia, with the exception of the black Wollo Galla breed, is most inferior, and the upper down country, which is admirably suited for sheep-farming, will never yield a satisfactory return until a better breed is imported, and then the export of wool will become of some importance. The sheep throughout Abyssinia can pick up a living where cows and even goats will starve, but still to tide over the three dry months, a little hay might be got together with little trouble, and given the animals at night time, when they are housed.

The goat is found everywhere throughout Abyssinia, and consist of large, medium, and small kinds. The large kind is highly prized, both for the milk and for the flesh of the males, which loses all its rankness when they are castrated soon after birth, and they then grow to an immense size, and get very fat. The price of a cut goat is very often double or treble of that of a sheep, although they do not weigh twice the weight. The horns of the large goats are often thirty inches in length, and stand up straight from the head, and look more like the horns of an antelope than of a goat; some of the horns have a slightly forward bend, and when the animal stands sideways, the two horns are in line, and only one can be seen; they are then not unlike the picture of the mythical unicorn. The medium sized animals produce a good quantity of hair, that is also used for making into cloth, and the smallest sized beasts have smooth coats, and are kept for their milk and flesh. The goat feeds amongst the scrub, and is not allowed to go so far from the villages as the sheep. The latter, except during the lambing season, are driven to the upper downs by the shepherds, and often remain there till the rainy season sets in, when they return to the valleys and the vicinity of the villages.

The shepherds build on the downs small houses and stone enclosures with walls about five feet high, in which the sheep are kept at night, and they have very good watch-dogs, like the usual Eastern pariah, and about the same size. These dogs have good noses and make fair hunting dogs, and run by scent as well as by eye. They soon learn to run cunning; one or two when they start an oribi, duiker or klipspringer will get out in the open and try to get ahead of the animal, which is perhaps running through the bush, followed by the other dogs giving tongue. The dogs that try to get ahead of the antelope always run mute, and it is very seldom that the pack fails to kill. Unless the shepherds follow quickly, there is not much of the quarry left, as the dogs live mostly by hunting. They kill jackals and foxes in numbers, and the larger dogs will also tackle the hyena, which often falls a prey to them, but they never attack in front, and always try to bite at the thin skin between the legs, or at the stomach underneath the last ribs. The town pariah contents himself by barking at the hyena, and one can always tell when the dogs belonging to the shepherds are back at the villages, as they always give chase to the hyena, who makes a terrible noise with his howls when he is bitten. The short neck of the hyena prevents him defending himself so well from a rear attack, and this the dog seems to know from experience. One bite from the hyena is quite sufficient to break a dog's leg or make a wound which nearly always proves fatal, as the strength of its jaw is immense, and it generally carries away a large piece of flesh with each bite.

The hyena seems to be more partial to donkey than any other animal, and whenever it is hungry, no matter if there are unfinished corpses in the vicinity, it will always attack a stray donkey if possible. Sometimes if there is only a single hyena, the donkey will get away, as he runs into a thick bush, defends himself with his heels, and the hyena after receiving a kick or two about the head, makes off, leaving the donkey with perhaps a bad bite or two. If there is more than one hyena the donkey stands no chance and gets killed. Horses and mules are also attacked and get badly bitten; it is always as well when buying transport or riding animals in Abyssinia, to reject any animal that shows any sign of having been wounded by a hyena. They never get over their fright of this animal, and are always nervous the moment it approaches near the camp, and

begin pulling at their picket ropes and disturbing the other mules and horses; and it often ends by the picketing pins being drawn and a stampede taking place, just what the hyenas want, and they then follow the alarmed beasts, and, unless help speedily arrives and a shot or two fired, some of the animals get bitten.

A riding mule of mine was attacked one night, and defended herself by kicking at the hyena until I drove it away with a big stick; she used afterwards, although she only had one tooth mark on her fetlock, to shy wherever a hyena had been, and sometimes in the evening I could hardly get her along the road where it had passed; she used to prick her ears and snort, and then make a jump over its tracks. Till a mule is bitten, it is perfectly quiet and does not seem to take any notice of them; but afterwards they become very nervous and timid. I remember one moonlight evening, just after sunset in the Wollo country, seeing a herd of brood mares and their mule and horse foals chasing a hyena that had come out of its den earlier than usual, and they knocked it over, and kicked it several times, before it got away howling with fright. The Gallas, to whom the animals belonged, had great trouble to get them back to the village to shut them up.

It is hard to say where the original horse came from in Abyssinia, as it is not like the Arab, being a much meaner looking beast; in shape it is more like the Dongolowie, but it lacks the Roman nose of the latter, nor is it such a large animal. The Somali horse is not unlike the Abyssinian, but still they differ, as the former is much lighter and inferior to the latter, which perhaps may be accounted for by in and in breeding, and being nearly entirely a grass fed animal. The Abyssinian horse lacks the many marked bad points, such as the fiddle head, the ewe neck, slack loins, long springy pastern, and the peculiarly ugly set on of the tail of the Dongolowie animal, and is a more compact beast. It is used mostly in time of war by the upper classes, who always prefer riding a mule when travelling. The war horses that are ridden by the upper classes are invariably well kept, and some of them are very fine animals, about fifteen to fifteen and a half hands in height. I do not think that if the whole country was searched, there would be a sixteen hand horse found. The average height is about fourteen to fourteen and a half hands, and a small pony is curiously enough never seen. The peasants and soldiers are the people who mostly ride horses,

and they take very little care of them; others are used as pack animals for transporting merchandise, but they do not carry such heavy weights as the mules, nor are they so good at marching in rainy weather, or as sure-footed when loaded in a rocky country. Being mostly fed on grass they are generally in soft condition, and easily chafe and gall, and the sores on the withers, back, belly, and sides are something terrible to look at.

The Gallas keep more horses than the Abyssinians, and in olden days they used to raid the fertile parts of Abyssinia, and came from great distances without any warning. Being mounted and armed with a long lance, besides their throwing spears, they were more than a match for the peasant on foot, with only a sword and shield to defend himself with. The Abyssinian, with his breech-loading rifle and cartridges, now does not care for the Galla lancer, who if he has a rifle is generally a bad shot, and has to dismount to use it, and he then is at the mercy of the better shot. The Galla is a better horseman than the Abyssinian, but not nearly so good on foot.

The Abyssinian when fighting against a civilised force also fights on foot, like a mounted infantry man, and only uses his horse to carry him quickly from one position to another. The beasts as a rule have wonderfully good legs and hoofs; they are never shod, and the hoof never seems to get diseased, nor are sicknesses of the leg so prevalent as in England or Europe. The riding and pack horses are always geldings, and stallions are seldom ridden. There seems to be little or no selection made by keeping a good stallion to cover a select number of mares, and they are both allowed to run together; and the consequence is that the foals are inferior, and little or no attention is paid to them from the time they are born until they commence to be ridden when they are rising three. They have the cruel ring bit put in their mouths, and are saddled with the bad fitting wooden saddle, and in their first struggles they generally get badly marked in the mouth and back, and the more courage the animal has, the more he gets punished; it is no wonder that the Abyssinian horse is, after he has first been broken, a timid, cringing animal. Compare the treatment of the Arab foal to that of the Abyssinian; the former is caressed and fondled from the day of its birth, and is a plaything and a pet of the Arab children, and before it is a month old the youngest child has perhaps been seated on its back. It is

as a rule only the low class Arab that shows vice, which generally arises from bad treatment; the Abyssinian horse is seldom or never petted, and his vice is simply nervousness, which he invariably exhibits in strange places and with strange people. It takes some little time for him to gain confidence in a new master, but when he gets into European hands, and is well treated and ridden with a common snaffle-bit and a comfortable saddle he soon improves, and becomes a docile and easy beast to ride.

They are not noted for being good trotters, but they canter in the smoothest manner possible and will travel great distances at this pace. They gallop very fast for a short distance, and at half a mile will hold their own with any Arab; with care and attention they would make good polo mounts, as they are very sure footed, and very quick at turning. The mares are seldom ridden, and are kept for breeding purposes; in some parts of the country large droves of many hundreds are seen, many of them being very pretty animals and of good shape, being stoutly built and on clean legs, and no doubt if put to a good sire, capable of producing an excellent class of medium sized animal. No one has ever tried importing good blood to cross the mares with, and considering a mare only costs about 30s. to 60s. and grass is to be had for nothing, when the country gets more settled, breeding ponies may become a paying occupation.

Mules are always bred from the mare, and sired by the donkey; the Abyssinian always breed the first foal out of a brood mare with the horse, and then the next if possible with the donkey, and then alternately with the horse and donkey The mules seldom exceed thirteen hands in height, and are for the size very strong animals, considering they are so light boned. They carry very well a weight including saddle of 200 lbs., but a traveller should, if he wants to march quickly and keep his transport animals in good condition, not load more than 160 lbs.; with this weight he should be able to make comfortably at least twenty miles per diem. I weigh over 14 stone, and with my saddle and what I carried on it, I daresay the weight came nearly to 230 lbs.; my little thirteen and a half hand mule carried me on one of my visits from Massowah all through Abyssinia to Zeilah on the Somali coast, and no day seemed to be too long for her, and she was in better condition and fatter at the end of the journey than when she started.

With care and not overlading these animals, very hard work can be got out of them, and they will pick up a living where a horse would starve. They take after their dams more than their sires, and with the exception of the ears, they look more like compact little horses. They gallop, trot, and canter well, and some of them are fast walkers, going from three to three and a half miles an hour over bad ground. In colour they are mostly browns, bays, chestnuts, duns and whites; but party-coloured ones are not very common, though their dams are of all colours: duns, cream colour, skewbalds, piebalds, spotted whites, and all sorts of fancy colours besides ordinary ones; and in no other country have I seen so many varieties of curious marked animals fitted for circus work. The eyes of the horses are also of such peculiar colours, and many of them have eyes entirely different. Light blue and a silvery white being very uncommon, and which gives the animal an ugly appearance; they however do not transmit this defect to their progeny by the donkey except on rare occasions.

The donkeys that are used as sires are very small, but they are chosen from the largest that can be found in the country, say from eleven and a half to twelve hands at the most. The majority, however, hardly reach eleven hands, and this small class of animal accounts for the mules not being large. An occasional cross is seen, of which the horse is the father and the she-ass the mother; but they are very small and very often what might be called deformities. The late King Johannes' dwarf and jester had two which were kept as curiosities, and he used to ride them on holidays; but when he was serious, which he could be at times, he always got angry if he was chaffed about them.

Up till the present time Abyssinia has had no cause to improve her breed of cattle, as her native neighbours have been content to purchase what she had for sale, and the horned cattle in most cases were better than they could produce. The European will require a better animal, and the Italians have already turned their attention to improving the breed. For many years to come there is a good probability of a good cattle trade being done from Abyssinia to the Soudan, Egypt and Aden; and Abyssinia, if there is no return of rinderpest, will shortly be able to export largely, at the seasons of the year when grass is in sufficient quantities along the roads to enable the animals to graze their way without losing flesh. Abyssinia combines every element for success-

ful stock raising: good grass, plenty of cheap grain and a good climate, and no doubt when the country opens up and Europeans are allowed to hold property there, that large exports of cows, sheep, horses, and mules will take place.

The country will always be noted for its good cereals. Wheat grows to perfection and yields a fine hard grain of large size; there are many sorts cultivated, red, yellow, and the kind known as white. The best and the one that gives the heaviest crop has eight rows of grain on each ear, and is very like what is known as mummy wheat. I have seen fields of this corn growing near the towns that no doubt have received a plentiful supply of manure, quite equal to anything that we can produce in England. Barley is by far the largest crop of the country, and it is of most excellent quality wherever care is taken in its cultivation. The majority of it is grown on the bleak, bare uplands, and is nothing like so good in quality as that grown in the more sheltered valleys; there are many varieties of this grain, and several kinds with eight rows of ears the same as the wheat; the cereals do not grow to any great height, and are short and stout in the straw.

On the coins of the ancient dynasty of Axum an ear of grain is placed on each side of the head of the king or ruler of the country, and this no doubt represents the eight lined barley of Abyssinia. There is a black barley and also a little black wheat found, which I do not remember to have seen in any other country; the grains of both are excellent and very plump. Oats are not grown, but a few plants of them are found growing amongst the wheat and barley. The natives use wheat meal and barley meal, but curiously enough not oat meal. I always take a large stock of the latter with me when travelling, also pearl barley, and all the natives who have tasted them like both very much and always inquire what sort of grain they come from; and when I point to the despised oat, which grows very well in the country, they are astonished, and many of them have asked me to bring them, the next time I come, some English oats as seed. The pearl barley I have had many a joke out of, getting them to plant it, and when they complained that it would not come up, saying that their ground was no good. When grinding corn or barley to make flour from they first carefully remove all the oats or other seeds, and they are given to the chickens only and not to the horses, as they have an idea it is bad for them.

Abyssinia could produce a great deal more grain than it does at present, but there is little or no market for any surplus crop, and the natives do not dare put too much ground under cultivation owing to the taxation and insecurity of the country and the reasons I mentioned before. There are no wind-mills or water-mills in the country, and the grain is all ground in the same manner as it used to be thousands of years ago, namely by the women between two rubbing stones. The flour prepared in this way is, of course, not nearly so good and more gritty than that ground by machinery, and the number of hours lost per annum in this country over turning grain into flour by hand labour, instead of employing machinery, must be something enormous.

Chickens are the only poultry that the Abyssinians keep, and they are very small, but when young and fat are not bad eating. In central Abyssinia they have little or no value, and as many as a hundred can be purchased for an equivalent of two shillings. Eggs of course are very cheap, and by giving a woman a common coloured pocket-handkerchief, that costs less than a penny, any quantity can be procured. The eggs are small like those in Egypt, and the hens perhaps have not the energy to make them any larger, but in a temperate climate like Abyssinia they ought not to have the same excuse as the hen that lives in a hot one. Ducks and geese are not eaten so they are not kept, but where there is water, wild ones of many sorts are found. Two kinds of geese are common, the Egyptian, and a grey one a little larger, that is mostly confined to the Galla country. There are about twenty different sorts of duck, and the divers, such as the pochard, are well represented. The common teal, the gargeny, and the shovelur are the commonest of the European kinds.

The pig is not kept in Abyssinia, but a few imported specimens are found at Asmara, brought there by the Italians, and at Harar, by the Greeks and Armenians. Ras Merconen, the king's nephew, who has been to Italy, keeps pigs, but I do not know whether he eats them. The rabbit and hare are not eaten; the former does not live in the country, and is represented by a few imported specimens, and the latter is looked upon by the Abyssinian with abhorrence as being an unclean animal.

The cat is kept throughout as a domestic animal the same as in other places, and is very useful in killing the

rats and mice with which some of the houses swarm immediately the rains set in and they are driven from the fields. These cats are real mousers and ratters, and not the pampered things one sees in England. Some of the cats are very pretty, and a chinchilla coloured one, which has often eyes of different colour, generally light blue and yellow, would be well worth importing. I got three kittens of this breed given me at Axum, and I intended bringing them home with me, but unfortunately I did not return there.

The only dogs that differ from an ordinary pariah are the greyhounds of Walkeit, always used for hunting; they are hardly as big as the English kind, and are a trifle heavier boned and not quite so long in the head. They are generally of a red or brown colour. They make good pets, and are very affectionate and intelligent when once they have been kindly treated. They are splendid watch-dogs, and very plucky even to rashness. This finishes the list of domestic animals and birds that are found in the country; the pigeon is not found in a domesticated state, but there is one pigeon which is nearly so, as it builds in the churches and is never molested. It is about the size of our largest blue rocks, but the blue colour is replaced by a rich chestnut bronze, and it is a handsomer bird than the English.

The civet cat is also caught and kept in cages, and sometimes breeds in captivity; it is kept for its musk, which is an article of commerce. The glands in which the musk is secreted are cleared out with a small bone spoon, and the deposit kept in tightly secured cow-horns. Some of the Abyssinians keep as many as one hundred of these animals which are shut up in small cages or boxes, and they are allowed hardly any exercise, and the fatter they are kept and the less they walk about the more musk they secrete. They are generally fed on chickens or small birds, which are killed when they congregate on the grain crops, or are snared in nooses or caught with bird-lime.

The bee is extensively kept in some parts of the country where the wild honey is not sufficient, but in others the supply entirely depends on what can be found among the rocks and hollow trees. Honey is wanted for the manufacture of tedj or hydromel and for making sweetmeats and other dishes. Large quantities of beeswax are exported both from the north and south, but some of the rich people waste theirs, and do not keep it for the pedlars who come round and collect a little from each village. The export no doubt

could be raised largely. The hives in which the bees are kept are either made out of clay or out of a stem of a hollow tree, and are generally placed inside the houses for protection. A couple of small holes are bored through the wall of the house to allow the bees to enter their hives. Some are placed under the thatched eaves of the houses or in a secure place in the garden, where the great enemy to the bees, the ratel (*mellivora ratel*) cannot get at them. In some parts of the country, where property is secure, the hives are kept hanging up in the trees near the woods, and as many as a hundred of these long wooden cylinders, which are often five to six feet in length by about two feet in diameter, may be seen in a short distance of each other. The favourite tree selected is the wanza, on account of its large white trusses of flower which contains a lot of honey. I do not know the correct botanic name for this tree, but it mostly resembles the catalpa, which is often seen in some of the old-fashioned gardens in England. It bears a dark purple fruit about the size of a cherry, which is very good to eat.

The honey that the bees make from the wanza is delicious and pure white, and fetches a higher price than the darker sorts. Another honey that is greatly esteemed is that which comes from the highlands of Waag, Lasta and Yejju, where the giant erica or white heath is found. Few people know that the little white heath, that is seen in the florists' shops and greenhouses in England, grows into a lovely tall tree, sometimes reaching a height of fifty to sixty feet, and in parts of the year is covered from its base to its top with one mass of flower. It is perfectly hardy, as where it is found they have snow and sleet and sharp frosts at night, the puddles on the roadside being covered with ice. It, however, melts quickly as soon as the sun comes out, which it generally does during some part of the day.

The quantity of wild flowers in Abyssinia besides the bean, pea, and the various other pulses that are largely cultivated, always provides food for the tame and wild bees, and there is always something for them to gather, except perhaps in the height of the dry season, when they become least active. I have often sat at the edge of a cliff and watched the bees coming up from the warm valleys to gather honey from the flowers on the downs, one constant stream coming backwards and forwards. On rising from the valley they clear the edge of the cliff by about a couple of feet, and on their return they fly higher and, when they reach the

edge, they seem to shut their wings and fall rapidly down to their hives in the valley situated many hundred feet below. Here the beautiful little emerald and gold bee-eater may be seen levying toll on the passing insects, always choosing the bees laden with honey in preference to those that are setting out to obtain a supply.

CHAPTER XII

RAS MANGESHA

THE weather was so bad in July at Adowa, it being the height of the rainy season, that it was impossible to be out of doors the whole day long. The early mornings were generally fine, and it used to clear up about sunset again, but during the whole middle part of the day it was one incessant downpour of rain and thunderstorms, and again at night the rain and thunder were constant. The only way to go on with my researches of the battle-field was to start at grey dawn and get back before the bad part of the rain set in. The Assam river was always high in the early morning, and it entailed getting wet through with the nearly ice cold water, and riding in wet clothes till breakfast-time at about ten or eleven o'clock. I managed to do every part of the field except the part to the east of Mount Raio on the line of retreat.

I shall always remember the last morning that I was well enough to get out. My morning cup of tea had been made in the dark, and the only water to be procured was of a dark orange brown owing to the heavy rain, and I found a lot of human hair in the bottom of the cup, evidently from some dead Italian. A day or two before I had found a human toe-nail in my bath-water, and I simply collapsed with fever and disgust at the horrible work, and for ten days I did not much care what became of me. Mrs Ledg Mertcha nursed me, and she and one of my servants fed me with new milk, raw eggs and strong broth, and no one could have been kinder to me than the people of Adowa. Ras Aloula, who was at his new stronghold at Hassena some ten miles off, used to send daily to enquire after me, and the officials of Holy Trinity Church and the priests used to vie with each other to see what attention they could pay me.

For books I had part of several novels, Henty's "Account of the 1868 Expedition," half of James's "Wild Tribes of the Soudan" and some other remnants of Ledg Mertcha's library that had been destroyed by General Baratieri's irregulars

when they looted the town, not a whole book remained. The birds were my great source of amusement during the day, as a fig tree shaded the window alongside of my bed, and I used to watch the many beautiful specimens that used to visit it for its fruit. A pair of bulbubs got quite tame, and used to come regularly several times a day to the window-sill to be fed on dates which they would peck off my hand. The house martens had their nests inside the window and were feeding their young ones all day long, and I should not like to say how many hundreds of times per day they brought house-flies to their nests for the young birds. At night-time the jerbille mice used to play about, and they also got quite tame, scrambling for bits of bread which I used to drop off my bed for them.

The first of the wet weather broke up after a rain-storm that lasted for two whole days and part of the third night, during which I should not like to say how many inches of water fell. I do not think there was half an hour during the whole of this time that the rain left off. When there was no steady downpour there was a drizzle like a Scotch mist. Many of the roofless houses tumbled down, and, as the mud got washed out that held the stones together, I could hear them falling from inside the house. There was a landslip in the churchyard of the Trinity, and the big trench, in which several hundreds of the bodies from Adowa battle-field had been buried, opened, and the wash of the soil from the rain had also opened many newly-made graves near the town, and when the sun came out the smell was again intolerable. Weak as I was, after having had fever for twenty-three days, which I believe was enteric, I determined in spite of a slight attack of dysentery to leave at once for Axum, to get out of the pestilential surroundings, and as the next day was fine I left Adowa, passing on my way Captain De Martino's house and garden with its corpse-encumbered ground and the zareba in which the Italian troops and the native soldiers had been massacred by the followers of Dedjatch Besheer. I felt better after every mile that I put between myself and Adowa, and in spite of a storm when Axum was near, that drenched me through, arrived at Schimper's house none the worse for the journey. After a change of clothes and a good dinner, that Schimper's household know to cook, I went to bed breathing wholesome air for the first time for many days.

The next day I rented a nice clean house that had only just been finished, situated in a good garden full of green peas,

beans, pumpkins and other vegetables, with several splendid wanza trees that gave a delightful shade, under which I could sit and recoup my strength and receive my visitors and learn more from them of the interesting town and its history.

Schimper had left Adowa ill with fever before I got knocked over, and he was also a wreck, his strong frame having shrunk with the fever, and his stout face had become lantern jawed. His fever was also not of the malarial type, and was of a typhoid description. Evidently Adowa and its surroundings had been too much for both of us. Convalescence at Axum was charming, and I lived on the best that the town could produce, and that was everything that could be thought of in the shape of meat, game, fruit and vegetables, and I had my meals at Schimper's house, about a couple of hundred yards from my own, sending my cook over there to take up his quarters. We both soon began to pick up, and we used to eat three large meals per diem.

Ras Aloula was constantly in and out Axum to church on Sundays and Saints' days, and visiting his wife who was living in his house that I formerly occupied, and I always used to see him, and sometimes he used to ask me out to Hassena to breakfast. The six-mile ride out was charming, and the country was at its very best, all the trees in full leaf and flower, the mimosas one golden mass and the ground one kaleidoscopic carpet of wild flowers, and acres of the lovely "cyanotis hirsuta" with its fairy-like bloom. The Ras had chosen a very strong position to make his head-quarters at, and had learnt a lesson from the last war, as there was no height from which he could be shelled, and the boulder-clad ridge offered excellent cover, as men could get in under the rocks and be safe from bursting shell.

A few days after my arrival, I received an order from Ras Mangesha to proceed at once to Macalle, as he had had an answer from Cairo, and that he wished to see me at once. I pleaded sickness, and that I was not strong enough to travel, and the state of the roads, and that the rivers were in flood, and I asked Ras Aloula's advice what I should do, and he kindly wrote to Ras Mangesha, that it was impossible for me to travel until the rains were over. We had been cut off from the Hamasen since early July, on account of the stone bridge the Italians had built over the Mareb being entirely washed away, and my servant Hadgi Ali, who had gone to the Hamasen for boots (as I had only one pair) and money had not returned, and he might be indefinitely

delayed. To get round through the Agame was impossible, as it was in such a disturbed state, and the inhabitants of this country are a most truculent lot and would let no one pass, as they were frightened of the Italians on one side and Ras Mangesha on the other, and they did not want either of them to know what was going on. As soon as I got better I sent word to say I was coming, and I left with Schimper for Adowa *via* Hassena to say good-bye to Ras Aloula, and was told by him that I must not leave Adowa before I had heard from him, as the Agame had settled their disputes and he did not know what would take place.

On arrival at Adowa I found the place comparatively sweet again, nothing offensive in the atmosphere, as the heavy rains had washed the human bones completely bare, and instead of a festering mass of humanity the skulls shone as white balls over the landscape; the fields were covered with beautiful mushrooms, but their round shape put me so much in mind of baby skulls, that I shuddered at the very thought of eating them, although they are one of my favourite vegetables. I had hardly been in Adowa a couple of hours before I heard the beat of a drum and a man crying out, on going to the street door to see what was the matter, I found it was a proclamation from Ras Aloula calling every one to arms, and that further instructions would be given as to the meeting place, but ten days' provisions were to be got ready.

The man who had brought the proclamation was standing by his horse which was nearly spent, its legs all of a straddle, its head down and tail in the air, and had it to have travelled a little further it would certainly have dropped dead. The whole of the neighbours, men, women and children were out of their houses in a moment, and in a few minutes several other horsemen appeared with fresh animals, and they were given a copy of the proclamation, and were told that the order was only good as far as a certain district, which included about twenty-five miles east of Adowa. The men mounted and departed in different directions, making their horses go at their highest speed, and so the news went abroad to every hamlet in the district. I do not think five minutes elapsed from the time the first beat of the drum sounded until the new messengers were out of the town, and I could quite understand the rapid way in which news travels in the country, and how soon a large fighting force can be assembled. In the more densely populated places a call to

arms is known from its centre within a radius of one hundred and fifty miles, or over a distance of three hundred miles in less than twenty-four hours, and with the perfect system that the Abyssinians have, a large force can be concentrated at several points in a very short time, with ample provisions for a month if necessary.

I watched the householders preparing to take the field; one had not enough flour ground for a ten days' supply so he sent to a neighbour's house to procure some, which was given without the slightest hesitation; another neighbour's wife came in to help bake the thick cakes of bread called "hambesha," which keep longer than the thin angara, red pepper was put into a small cow-horn, and a supply of dried meat was taken out of the store, and another cow-horn was filled with butter, and in an incredibly short time the soldier was ready to start, his horse having been fetched from the water meadow and saddled, and a shamma, knife for grass cutting, and his provisions tied in a goat or sheep skin were fastened on his saddle. The rifle was taken from the wall, the cartridge belts round the waist and over the left shoulder put on, and the sword girt to the right side, and with a sheep skin over the shoulders, the man was off to the market green to see if he was the first unit on parade, ready to take the field. I went down to see the muster, and about twenty men were already assembled on horse back, about one hundred on mules, and a good many on foot; another messenger from Hassena shortly arrived, and a rendezvous was given for Legumti church, some twelve miles to the south-west, for ten o'clock next morning, and the men went back to their homes for the night.

Soon after, Ras Aloula appeared with about three hundred men, and the Nebrid of Axum, King Menelek's agent, was seen coming in from the direction of Axum with about thirty followers. The Ras sent a messenger to me to come and see him next morning at the church of our Saviour (Medhani Alam, the Saviour of the world) and I went off to dinner delighted at seeing a sight that few strangers have had the chance of witnessing. The news of the place of meeting was sent off in a more leisurely manner than the first summons to arms.

The governors of the large towns are responsible for giving the proclamation due effect, and the choums, or chiefs of villages, and the chika, or head men of the hamlets. A choum will have a good many main chikas or minor head

men under him, and the governor of the town, if of high enough rank, a good many choums; all these minor officials are chosen by the people, and the officials above a choum are nominated by the Ras, or governor of the province. In the appendix I give a list of officials according to rank, with notes on the government of the country.

Next morning I found the Ras busily engaged before sunrise in getting everything ready for the campaign, which he told me privately was to be against Ras Sebat, the prince of Agame, who had revolted against the king and Ras Mangesha, because he was not satisfied about his tribute, and that he should not be allowed to govern the whole of his province according to his own ideas, and he refused to give the two minor rulers, the Choum-Agamie and Hagos Taferi, their share of the taxation. He had about 1500 men under arms, all furnished with modern Wetterli breach loaders, but the old Ras expected to have 4000 men mustered by noon that day, and his face was wreathed in smiles at the chance of having a turn against his enemy and strike in on his flank, while Hagos Taferi, with Ras Mangesha's troops, engaged him in front.

I wanted to accompany Ras Aloula and see the fun, but he would not let me on any consideration, and told me to make the best of my way to Macalle; so I accordingly started, and soon after getting away the weather that had been fairly fine broke up again and we only got over the Farras Mai stream in time, five minutes more and it was not to be forded, and for about two miles we floundered through mud and water, till at last we reached better going at the foot of Legumti ridge, which joins on to Chelunko ridge, over which the road to Abbi-Addi goes.

We left Chelunko church to the north, our course being south-east, and we saw a large force of men already assembled, and groups of three or four fully armed men were constantly crossing our path, in spite of the rain, going to swell the muster at the meeting place; about five miles further we were stopped by the choum of Chelunko near his village and told that it was unsafe to proceed, and that he had orders to detain me until the country quieted down. I pleaded I was in a hurry, and that Ras Mangesha was waiting for me, and he informed me he had already sent a messenger on to Macalle to tell the Ras that I was detained, owing to the road not being safe, and it was almost impossible for me to cross the Ghiva river while it was in

full flood, and I had better wait till the weather got better, and at a place where I could obtain supplies. I was of course very annoyed, but the Choum was so kind I could not disobey his orders, and his advice was good. I remained at this camp, which was in the uncultivated part of the district *vis-à-vis* to the village, for six days, with nothing to do for the first three days but look at a rain-sodden and watery landscape; it was useless my moving camp to nearer the village as it was nearly all in ruins and every house was full of inmates, and I could not find a corner to shelter me.

The people were very civil and the women and children used to bring down supplies for sale, and I refused to receive rations from them, which they had been ordered to give by Ras Mangesha, as I do not believe in levying taxes on poor people who cannot afford it. They had been looted by King Menelek's army of nearly everything they had and I did not wish to take more. Here I was glad when the faithful Hadgi Ali turned up with the news that at last he had been able to get me some supplies across the Mareb, and he brought me a letter from Mulazzani, an English and some Italian newspapers, some cigarettes and pipe tobacco; the latter had been out for a long time, I having given it all to the Italian prisoners, and I was on a ration of about five cigarettes a day, and I only had enough to last me for two or three days more. Luxuries were to arrive in a day or two and I felt in better sorts, and Schimper was also happy that we were not going to see Ras Mangesha empty handed, and we need not think twice about opening a tin of provisions.

I am not aware if any of my readers know what it is to be run out of everything, and then, when things look blackest, to find all of a sudden that visions of plenty are but a few hours off; we opened a lot of things that day for dinner and enjoyed ourselves, and I must have smoked half a box of cigarettes that evening, and as soon as dinner was over looked at the English paper, which contained an account of the Derby won by the Prince of Wales's "Persimmon," and Schimper and I drank success to His Highness in a glass of hydromel.

The feast of the Holy Cross was commencing, and on the first night of the festival the Choum and his people came to visit me, each carrying a lighted torch and singing a weird song as they approached. I thought this was an excellent opportunity for asking him to leave, as no news of the end

of the rebellion had reached us, and I managed to get permission to leave next morning by a bridle path across the Gheralta mountains to Macalle as the main road to the east was still blocked. I left the majority of my stores with the choum and only took a month's supply with me, thinking this would be more than ample, and he promised to return them to Adowa. I left a lot of things behind and some money so as not to be short on my return, and I was destined, as it turned out, never to see these things again, as circumstances over which I had no control prevented me from going to the north again, and all my collection of curiosities, presents from the natives and officials and other things that I bought, till this day wait for my return to the country. I still live in hopes of seeing the remains of them some day.

I bought here a splendid Italian mule, a beast over fifteen and a half hands; it belonged to the choum and he could do nothing with it as the poor beast had taken a dislike to the Abyssinians and bit and kicked at everybody that came near her. We are given to believe that a mule has only four legs, but when they are on the rampage and are using all their legs kicking out in front and behind, they seem to have a great many more, and this beast when I saw the Abyssinians trying to catch her had I do not know how many. Having bought her and paid the money, I asked my Somali syce to go and bring her from the water meadow to the camp; as soon as he approached she opened her mouth and put her ears back and went for him, and the syce fled and dodged round a bush about a foot to the good. I could not help laughing as the syce was nearly crying, and would have nothing to do with what he called "Mrs Devil animal."

I could not leave it where it was, and the choum evidently thought that he would again get the mule and the money as well, so I tried my hand and put some barley, bread and some lumps of sugar into a basket and went up to it, using the most endearing Italian terms. She hesitated and then put her ears back. I kept perfectly still and held out my peace-offering, and at last after a snort or two she made up her mind to see what was in the basket; the bread being Abyssinian she would not touch, but pushed it away disdainfully with her nose, but the barley she liked, perhaps not having had any for months, and she accepted the sugar which she must have tasted before when under the charge

of the Italians. She then followed me to camp, and as soon as she got to it at once commenced chasing the servants round the tent, and they sought refuge under the flaps. Hadgi-Ali was the first to make friends and talked to her in Italian, and between us we put a halter on her and tied her up with the riding mules. For a long time she would not let anyone come near her except Hadgi-Ali and myself, and I could always clear camp of the Abyssinians by letting her loose, and during the time that I had her she did considerable damage to several people who had no right to be where they were. It proved an invaluable beast, improved in condition and was a perfect picture with her glossy black coat and chestnut points, when I gave her away as a present to Ras Merconen at Harar.

I rode her over all the bad rivers, as from her size and strength she could carry twice the weight that an Abyssinian mule could and would take me over a stream fairly dry while the water was up to the backs of the native animals; she thus could take over our stores without them getting wet, and we used her to carry everything across stream; the Somalis christened her the "felucca" or boat. She was not shod and her hoofs at the end of the journey were not the least worn. No horse, mule or donkey is shod in Abyssinia and one never sees an animal lame from hoof disease, shoulder complaints, strains and rheumatism are however very common.

What I always marvel at in Abyssinia is the wonderful strength of the horny part of the horses' and mules' feet, they seem to be of a much tougher and more endurable texture than those in Europe; and no English animal could stand the perpetual work over the rocks and stony ground without going dead lame. It may be that too much attention is paid to the feet of our horses, and that they have deteriorated from wearing shoes the same as the white man's feet have from the same cause. Mud fever is not nearly so prevalent in Abyssinia as elsewhere, and the animals' legs for months during the rainy season are incased with dirt which is wet when they enter their sheds at night, and hard and dry in the morning when they are let out. No one ever hears of an Abyssinian horse's or mule's feet wanting paring. I made a collection of four horses' and four mules' hoofs when at Adowa to bring home with me so that I might get a veterinary surgeon's opinion on them, but like the rest of my things they were left behind.

We got away from Legumti in a pouring rain, and the marching was so bad that we could make little progress through the deep holding soil, and we had to camp early as it was useless going on. We chose a lull for putting up our tent, and the sun came out and partly dried us and we could get a glimpse of the grand Gheralta range with its steep sides up which we had to make our way. As soon as we got dry a sudden thunderstorm came on, and the Gheralta range was gradually hidden until the whole landscape was shut out by the thick black clouds, and flash of lightning and crash of thunder were simultaneous. The lightning struck a tree within fifty yards of our tent shivering it to atoms; and I experienced that peculiar sort of sinking feeling that comes on when one has just passed through a near escape from a terrible accident. I looked round at Schimper and the servants, and their faces were set as if they were bronze statues, and two of the Abyssinians were sitting on the ground and had their heads bowed down on their knees; the mules even had left off eating grass and held their heads low, snorting and trembling with fear; another purple blue flash, and about two seconds' interval the thunder again rattled and died away with the reverberating echoes from mountain to mountain.

I do not think there is any time like when one of these awful storms are going on to make one feel the littleness and the insignificance of man, but still I like them, and the grandeur of the elements are nowhere so great that I have seen as in Abyssinia, and the little protection that a tent gives in comparison to a house seems to make them the more sublime. I do not advise anyone that is the least timid to try and spend a rainy season under canvas in the most mountainous part of Abyssinia; English storms are as squibs and crackers in comparison. I always remember the thunderstorm at Zahie that lasted for three hours.

Since leaving Adowa I had hardly been dry for any length of time, and all my clothes were more or less damp, and I had had several touches of fever; the ducking after this storm and the cold wind that followed it gave me a very bad bout. I managed to scramble on my mule next morning, although shaking with fever, and made off to the valley of the Ghiva to try our luck at crossing the river, and, if possible, to get across the ford before another bad storm came on. It was a lovely calm morning, such a contrast to the storm the afternoon before, and the view towards the west was lovely; the Semien range with its snow top was clearly visible; the

Ghiva, which is here in a flat open valley, was running a silver thread below us, and the limestone and forest-covered sides of the Gheralta mountain lay in front of us, and our guide pointed some 3000 feet up at the rock we had to pass before we reached the summit.

The river having shelving banks easily overflows and inundates the whole of the lower portion of the valley which, being protected from the winds from all sides except the west, gives it a nearly tropical climate in the centre of a temperate district. This place is noted for its fine cotton, and all the lower land above high water level is covered with luxuriant gardens, and when we passed through, the bushes were covered with the various coloured flowers, red, orange, and all shades of yellow. Coffee ought to thrive well, but I did not see any. The country is but very sparsely populated during the rainy season, and the whole way from Legumti we had not seen half a dozen people, and it was no weather for travelling in. At Zahie there are a few houses, but the majority of the population died from the famine and cholera, and the whole district by the ruins in olden times must have been even a great deal more thickly populated than it was before the epidemic broke out.

We crossed the Ghiva which was only about four feet deep, the "felucca" carrying everything across perfectly dry. The bed and banks of the Ghiva are thickly covered with fresh water mussels, the first time I have ever seen them in such quantities in Abyssinia; many of them are of fair size, the shells being fully five inches in length. The last night's storm had brought the river down a great height, and I can quite understand what a dangerous stream it must be to cross when it is a raging torrent over a quarter of a mile in breadth, with its muddy and holding alluvial bottom. The storm had evidently been one blessing as it had killed millions of young locusts, and even the big ones that could fly had such a washed-out and battered appearance that they would never be able to do any more injury to the crops, and their feeding days were over.

About half way up the ascent of the Gheralta range I had to give in and lay down in the hot sun, shaking with fever. I could neither walk nor sit on my mule, luckily the hermitage of Abaro was quite close and Schimper went off to pitch camp there, and in about a couple of hours the cold fit gave way to the hot access when I could throw off all my covers and manage to walk the mile to the tents.

Abaro is not always inhabited, and the old hermit was away, as well as the monks that generally come to this place to fast and pray. The church is half a cave and half stone-work, and the roof thatched with rushes. It is situated on a gigantic limestone slab, and its surroundings are most beautiful as it is built on the side of a narrow gorge covered with lovely maiden's hair fern, down which a small waterfall finds its way from ledge to ledge. The only glimpse of country is down the gorge, the mountain fortress prison of Amba-Salama being in the middle distance and the Sabandas range in the background, and this only through a vista between the large ficus trees that clung to the gorge with their enormous long grey roots that looked like huge snakes clambering over the rocks. Tradition says that the patron saint of Abyssinia, St Tchlaihaimanout, used to come here to pray, and that the hermitage dates from the earliest Christian times. It was a lovely peaceable spot far removed from any village.

We had another bad storm here and nature turned the waterfall on in full force, and it came thundering down and could hardly be recognised as the same small trickle of the morning. I took a large teaspoonful of quinine and managed to get some sleep, when a wind storm came down the gorge and overthrew the tent on account of the poles not being bayonet-socketed at the joint, and we were all floundering about under the canvas in the dark; it took us a long time to get the tent up and all the servants got drenched. I again got a good sleep, and the morning broke fine and warm with my fever gone but feeling the effects of the quinine. The ascent up the goat path was most tedious, and the huge limestone boulders were so close together that they would only allow of one box being carried by each mule on the top of the saddle, and in some places the animals had to be unloaded and the boxes carried or drawn up the rocks by ropes. I was too weak to give a hand, and it took us about four hours to get up to the top of the pass; we then arrived at a more open country cut up by deep chasms.

The whole country was of limestone formation and full of all sorts of fossils and corals, and how this country has been pushed up to its great altitude is very interesting. We must have arrived at a height of at least 10,000 feet, as the mountains round Macalle were of much lower elevation, and the flora was also curious, and the majority of the flowers with greenish blooms. A climbing geranium with a horseshoe

mark on the leaf, with bright green blooms with a faint scarlet stripe down each petal was very common and also very pretty, also a crown lily with pale green flowers was curious. Here the locusts lay dead all over the country, the storm of two days ago having killed them in millions. This country is supposed to give very good sport, it being full of small antelope, and the kudoo is still to be found, and I saw plenty of their spoor; we came across several pairs of horns, the animals having evidently died of the cattle disease. Leopards are also reported as common, and I saw their footmarks, and my servants caught sight of a couple that were watching a herd of oribi.

I should much like to visit this district in fine weather, as it offers a splendid opening for collecting, and Schimper says his father had never visited this district, and he believed no Europeans had taken this route, at which I am not surprised, as a rougher bit of country would be hard to find in Abyssinia. The Legumti choum told me it was a goat path and so it proved, as it was only fit for goats and monkeys to travel over. I was delighted to see more open country before me, and on entering it Macalle was in sight some eight miles off, across an open plateau with mole-hill eminences, but as we were all fagged out, and it was getting near sunset, we camped near the village of Inder Mariam Dahan for the night so as to get a long rest and to clean up before we entered Ras Mangesha's chief town. I sent in a messenger to say that I arrived and was not well but would call next day, and the messenger came back late in the evening with a present of food from the Ras and some of his own particular brew of most excellent tedg, and all sorts of pretty compliments.

We had a cold fine night and no rain, but we had about the most noisy lot of hyenas I ever met, and sometimes they came so close as nearly to stampede the mules, and we had to keep two large fires going all night. Inder Mariam Dahan is such a pretty place; the villages which seem very well to do are scattered about on isolated hills clothed with trees and hedged with the candebra euphorbia; giant sycamore trees are also common, and the entire district is well cultivated. The whole way from our camping place to Macalle is one large plain of grass meadows, and we saw before sunset endless herds of horned cattle and droves of horses and mules wending their way from the grass land to hamlets on the hillsides. The drainage from the plateau and the surrounding mountains all join at Inder Mariam Dahan

and forms a stream about a hundred yards broad which plunges in one sheet of water with about a forty feet drop in a small lake about a third of a mile in circumference. There are two big whirlpools in the lake, one near the fall and the other at the side of the exit, which is very narrow.

We started next morning in our best clothes across the plateau for Macalle. The going was very deep and holding, and innumerous water courses had to be crossed, the bottoms of which were composed of water-worn limestone rocks and the sides of black mud which was very slippery, and my mule and I came to grief both going into a black slush hole and dirtying my nice clean clothes. I had to take off my lower garments and dry them in the sun, and in this state I had to receive an officer sent out by the Ras to meet me. I don't think it mattered very much as he might have thought it was the usual way of going about in England in dirty roads. I sent him back to say I was coming, and when dry continued my journey.

The bog holes on the plateau were full of the fan-tail snipe, so common in Egypt, and they got up all around us, and I could have had pretty shooting if I had had any small shot, but cartridges were a great deal too valuable to be used on such a small bird. Ducks were also numerous and of many sorts, and so was the ubiquitous Egyptian goose that is found everywhere in the country where there is an apology for a pond; there were many broods of nearly full grown goslings which I sent my Somalis after, and after a short chase they brought back three very fat ones; these are delicious eating and very tender, and the old birds are the reverse and have to be stewed for hours before they are fit to eat.

Nearing the town I recognised the figure of my friend the dwarf, Barrambarras Marou, coming along the road, followed by several small boys that were evidently annoying him as he would occasionally stoop down and pick up a stone to throw at them, and they would then run away and keep just out of reach. When he came up to me he got hold of my foot and kissed it, and said that he wanted a ride and wanted to be put up behind Schimper who did not seem to see it. I suggested he should get on the Italian mule between two boxes, and by clambering up a rock by the side of the road he managed to take a flying leap on to the baggage and seated himself cross leg between the boxes, which he immediately commenced hammering as if they

were kettle-drums, and at the same time singing a war song. With the dwarf heading our procession we proceeded to Ras Mangesha's palace, where we received a hearty welcome and were asked to stop and have breakfast, but I pleaded being too ill with fever to remain and that I should prefer making myself comfortable and getting my tent ready before the afternoon rain started, as it was already threatening.

I was given an official, no less a personage than the chamberlain belonging to the Ras, to look out after me and was taken to his garden to camp in. I did not like the house offered me, so I pitched my tent under the shade of a Wanza tree in full flower and leaf and made myself very comfortable. Schimper put his tent up quite close to mine between two enormous peach trees; the chamberlain lent us a tent large enough to accommodate thirty men for the servants, and we soon had a good kitchen started against the side of a large stone stable which we roofed with goat hair rugs, and by the time everything was finished and proper drainage trenches dug the rain came down. After these preparations we could laugh at anything short of a deluge, as our camp was fixed too securely for anything to be blown down, and all the tent pegs were strengthened by having piles of stones put over them so it was impossible for them to draw. After the rain was over we all turned out to make the camp look decent; paths made and lined with stones, weeds pulled up and rubbish collected, and the trees trimmed so as not to be in the way, and by the time the chamberlain came back in the evening from the Ras he hardly knew the untidy part of the garden that I had chosen to camp in. His household took deep interest in everything we were doing, and two or three of the small boys also helped to carry the rubbish away. To my utter surprise next morning all the inhabitants of the establishment turned out and cleaned up the rest of the place, and in a few days we had the neatest garden and the nicest looking enclosure in all Macalle; it only shows what a little example will do.

Ledg Mertcha who had been to Cairo was encamping in the same garden and he gave me a hearty welcome, and I asked the old man to consider himself as my guest while I remained at Macalle as I knew he preferred European cooking to Abyssinian, and if he came to my tent he could eat what he liked and would not have to fast. The consequence was that during my stay of over three weeks at Macalle I

saw him more or less all day long and he never missed a meal, and I tried to repay the kindness I have invariably received at his hands when in Abyssinia. Before, when he used to travel to Egypt, he always made use of my house at Suakin and Jeddah, and I perhaps know as much as any European of this curious old character, and he is a fair representative of the old-fashioned, educated Abyssinian. I have always found him truthful and honest, and a curious mixture of semi-modern ideas grafted on to a stock of fifteenth century civilisation, and his ideas of the reforms required for his country impossible and impracticable, as the ruler of the north is not strong enough in character to carry them out.

The Abyssinian will never keep quiet under a café house, boulevard regime, nor a ruler that gets his ideas from a puny missionary mode of life; the Abyssinians are hunters and athletes by nature, and believe in the muscular order of Christianity, and their monks and priests that lead a hard agricultural mode of life are a great deal more in touch with the peasantry and more listened to than those that lead a sedentary life. Old age, however, they respect as long as youth has been spent in toil. A man has always ruled Abyssinia, not a bookworm or clerk, and a man they will have to govern them and he only will they listen to.

The first night after my arrival we sat up till the small hours of the morning, Ledg Mertcha doing all the talking. I could see, although he was too politic to tell me, that his mission to Cairo had been most unsatisfactory, and from the dwarf in the morning I heard that his master was in a bad temper; court fools have their use, so I told him I was not pleased, which would be certain to go to the place I wanted it to. My position I could see was not the pleasantest although there was no danger; the day that it was possible to ill-treat a European in Abyssinia, thanks to the English, died on the heights of Magdala, and there is, I consider, absolutely no danger to an Englishman travelling in the country as long as he behaves himself and steers clear of politics, local or otherwise; the very worst that can happen is detention, running out of European stores and then having to live like the natives, no very terrible ordeal as long as one has a good cook, as the country produces good food in plenty. I retired to bed, anxious to see what the interview with the Ras would bring forth and what the claimant of the throne of Abyssinia would have to say for himself, as I

could not be convinced by Ledg Mertcha of his great abilities, nor had his conduct hitherto or the present state of his country shown me that he was a fit person to place any great confidence in, nor could I find out that he was respected. He was neither liked nor disliked which is no great recommendation, and he certainly was not feared.

CHAPTER XIII

MACALLE

MACALLE is a most charmingly situated town, and it occupied before the war a good large area and perhaps consisted of about 500 enclosures with four to six houses in each; giving six inhabitants to a house would bring its permanent population up to about 15,000, which had been reduced to about the half by the war and famine. The majority of the trees in the gardens had been cut down for defensive purposes and for firewood, and part of the town had been looted both by the Italians and King Menelek's troops. The king's palace, the church and the property of the priests had not suffered so much. The houses with their enclosures are built on several minor hills, with a semi-circular background of high mountains protecting the town from the north-east, east and south-east, and the town faces and looks over the plateau we came across, which is backed by the Gheralta range.

The road taken by the English expedition runs about four miles further to the east, and at that time Macalle was of very little importance, except as a residence of the priests; the two important towns in the vicinity were Chelicut and Antalo, both of which are now places of only second-rate importance, and are not one-third of their former size.

On the highest portion of the largest of the hills in the centre of the town, the late King Johannes built his palace. The architect was an Italian named Nareti, for many years resident in the country, helped by Schimper, who was travelling with me, and a staff of skilful masons and carpenters, and when new the building must have done great credit to the designers. It is far and away the best building I have seen in the country, and not at all ugly, being built of well cut limestone blocks well pointed with cement. A large porch leads into a long room or hall, which takes up the whole width of the building, and its length is quite one hundred and fifty feet; the flat roof is supported by a row of

pillars down the whole length, the two side parts being about half the width of the main part, and the entire breadth being about sixty feet, the height is about twenty-five feet. The ceiling is boarded with wanza planks, and the large windows with their shutters and the doors are also made of the same material. At the end of this hall is the throne on a raised platform, and two flights of well made wanza wood steps lead to an upper set of apartments, which again open out to the roof, and the four turrets at the corners of the building also make four rooms. At the back of the throne there are a set of apartments, where the Ras receives in private and transacts the whole of his business of state; these open out on to a well kept lawn with many shady trees, and some good orange; lime, peach and myrtle bushes, and there is also a nicely built summer-house where private guests are received, and where the mid-day meal is generally partaken with his favourite followers. After the meal is over, seats are placed under an immense tamarind tree, from which a good view is obtained of the protecting mountains to the east and the churches with their large church-grove, with its many enormous sycamore fig trees; in this cool place the Ras, when business is over, will sit and talk, and here I had many interviews with him.

To the right of the main building are the private apartments, and where he and his wife live there are two separate houses joined by a covered bridge; in the upper stories the Ras and his wife live, and in the lower are the attendants, kitchens and store-houses. Access is had from the main garden through the stables, which are continued as other servants' rooms and store-houses. There is another private garden which is used by Ras Mangesha's wife and her companions, but I did not go into it; this garden leads to another adjoining enclosure, where Ras Mangesha's mother lives.

The Ras's wife is very pretty, and very fair for an Abyssinian, and the little I saw of her I liked very much. Etiquette prevented me from going to her house, but she always used to nod and wave her hand when she saw me either in the palace grounds, or when she passed me on her way to church. Her aunt, Queen Taiton, is very dark and stout, but she takes more after her father Ras Woly, who is a very big man. She is very tall for an Abyssinian and of a very graceful figure, and whenever I saw her beautifully dressed and with very good taste. She has the reputation of

being very clever, and there can be no doubt that the women of the upper classes of the country are very much cleverer than the men, and therefore capable of a very high state of civilisation.

All that I have seen of the upper female class in Abyssinia, and I have seen my share, makes me certain that, as soon as the country is a little more opened up, they will play a most important part in the politics of the country, and that they will make themselves be listened to by the men, who dare not treat them as a Moslem, Turk or Pasha would do his wife, and they have always the appeal to the church, which the poor Mahomedan woman has not. Her quarrels with her lord and master generally end in being summarily divorced, or being put in a sack and thrown into the nearest pond, river or sea. I rather fancy the Turk has sometimes the best of the Englishman, and I know several married men who wish that they and their partners belonged to the Mahomedan faith, and that they lived near some convenient sheet of water.

The palace at Macalle, when it was first built, served as a strong fortification, but is now obsolete, and as the king possessed a great number of Remington rifles, his enemy, armed with obsolete rifles of high trajectory and short range, could occupy no height which could command the position; the nearest heights are from 1000 to 1400 yards, and modern rifles could now command every part of the palace and enclosure. The place is surrounded by a high wall, loop-holed for musketry, and the irregular area of ground enclosed is a good many acres in extent, the wall being at least three quarters of a mile round, strongly defended in several places, and at the gate by guard-houses. There is an inner wall round the palace about eight hundred yards round, also strongly defended, and the palace forms part of a third line of defence which has also strong walls round the private apartments, stables, and store-houses. From the castellated roof and turrets, and all round, fire can also be kept up. There is a very good unfailing spring of water in the garden, and a small stream runs within fifty yards of the main gate, so when the place is victualled with plenty of provisions it could stand a long siege, but the place would be perfectly untenable against a couple of machine guns placed in the church-grove, or on the neighbouring hills to the east.

The meeting with the Ras took place the next day, and he made Ledg Mertcha, Schimper and I remain to breakfast.

The conversation was general, and he asked all sorts of questions about England, the navy, army, form of government, justice and everything else, and how it was that the two Parliamentary parties never fought one against the other. The Ras cannot pronounce the English letter "r" and makes it an "l," so he was always saying Losebely for Rosebery, and Salisbely for Salisbury, and he could not make out why Losebely did not fight Salisbely when the former was defeated at the polls, and the followers of one did not fight against the followers of the other all over the kingdom.

I explained to him that we did in olden days, and that many years ago one party defeated the other, because the king, who sided with one party, did not rule wisely, and it ended up by the king having his head cut off, and the people doing without a king for a short time, and having government by Parliament; but we had to return to a monarchy, as it was the best form of government and the most honest one, as when we had a king or queen they were the supreme head, and insisted on the country being ruled by those chosen by the people in a just and proper manner, and if they did not do so, they could be removed from power, and the people chose other officials to make the laws.

I made a sly hit at his form of government, and asked why it was that Ras Sebat had rebelled against him, and he replied, because he was a bad man and would not govern properly, and ill-treated his subjects, and only a few of the people were on his side, and wished to have Hagos Taferi as ruler, and that everyone was helping the latter against the former. I told him that the majority in England decided the question always, and if Ras Sebat was an Englishman he would give way without fighting, and he said it would be a good thing if Abyssinians would do the same, but they would not, so they had to settle their quarrels by fighting.

I had interviews generally twice a day with the Ras, and he always led up to the subject, why it was that the English Government did not help Abyssinia after they had made a treaty with his father, who was their great friend, and had died fighting against the Dervishes who were also fighting against England, and that his father had done everything the English had asked. He asked me who it was that had allowed the Italians to come to Massowah, and had behaved so badly to the Abyssinians, whether it was done by Salisbely or Losebely. I then had to explain to him again how these matters were supposed by the public to be settled, and who

were in power, and brought out Whitaker's Almanac to show him who formed the Government at the time, and that it must have been decided by the majority of those people sitting in council, and then Her Majesty the Queen had given her sanction, seeing it was the wish of her advisers. The almanac pointed to Mr Gladstone being in power at the time, so I told him it was neither of the Ministers he mentioned, and that since that time many of the most powerful people had changed their way of thinking, and things were done by that Ministry which made many of the English people very angry, and had been the cause of ruin and death to thousands of innocent people who wanted to be friends of England.

He asked why we did not avenge Gordon's death at the time, and many other questions which put me into a very awkward position; and he ended up by saying that he thought there must be in England just as many people as bad as Ras Sebat, who was only trying to get power in his hands, and did not mind what means he used to gain his ends. I do not think that many people have been "heckled" by an intelligent native and asked to explain the foreign policy of 1880 to 1885. As far as Abyssinia is concerned it was not an honest one, and seemed very Jesuitical, doing harm that good may come from it in the end. One cannot forget that one is an Englishman, and no matter what shade of politics one belongs to, to try and explain away the fact of making use of a country to do our fighting, and then pitching them away like a worn-out shoe after they had done everything they were asked to, is a very hard job. I felt "right down mean" over it, as an American would say, and I wish that some one who had been responsible for the policy had been there to have answered the questions put me.

The Ras gave several large feasts while I was there, all of which I attended, and they did not differ from the one described at Abbi-Addi. Holy Cross Day, at the end of our month of September, was well worth seeing, as Ras Sebat had been defeated by that time, and had given in his submission and been pardoned, and all the troops that could be spared came to the muster. Holy Cross Day falls at the slackest time of the year, just before the principal harvest becomes ripe, when everyone can leave their fields and come and pay their respects to the Ras. Rifles that have been served out by the Ras are then examined, and cartridges counted, and if any rifle is in bad repair, it is exchanged for another; this does not mean that the countryman has not

another weapon and more cartridges his own private property, as many of them have two or three besides, with which they can arm their sons and servants who are not forced to carry arms for the Ras. It is very hard to say at a pinch what number of men are capable of bearing arms in Abyssinia, and what number could be put into the field, as there is no census kept, and the number of rifles borne by the fighting men is no guide. There is no hut tax, and the King's or Ras's tenth of the produce grown gives no idea. There can be no doubt, however, that the country carries a much larger population than most travellers give it, as the most populous districts are a long way off the main roads.

I was told by Ledg Mertcha and Schimper that, during Holy Cross week, over 30,000 fighting men visited Macalle, and I should think that on the great parade day some 8000 to 9000 people mustered during the afternoon and morning, and over 7000 men were fed at the palace in one day, or at the rate of about eight hundred an hour. The large room being completely full on many occasions, and the second enclosure as well, considerably over a hundred cows were slaughtered, and all the common tedj and native beer was consumed, and I should not like to say how many women were engaged in making bread and brewing, days before the feast took place.

It was a grand sight seeing the Ras and all the officials of Tigré, minor rases down to choums and chicas going to church, all dressed in their best, with clean national shammas and bright silks and satins on, many of them with lion mane collars. All of the leading men had their silver shields carried before them, and the gold mounted swords, and silver and silver gilt armlets made a glittering procession, and a dazzling show of colour. I went to the church-grove, but did not go inside the church, and the scene would have been worthy of any artist's brush. The old grey stone church, the enormous sycamore fig, and other fine trees, the roses, jasmine and other flowers in full bloom, with the gay uniforms of the soldiers and leading men, and the really clean white dresses of the women and girls, also laden with jewellery. I had quite a crowd round me, and I also had my best clothes on, and my miniature medals which they all wanted to see, so I was obliged to take them off and hand them round ; many of the men bowing, and putting the medal with the bust of Her Majesty on to their foreheads. They asked me what they were for, and I told them for fighting

against the Dervishes, then those that had wounds began to show them, and one said Kufit, another Metemmah, and so on.

They all wanted to know if English soldiers were paid, and what they got in pay, and if they were properly fed and clothed, and after I had told them I believe if an English recruiting sergeant had been there, he could have engaged them all to fight anywhere, and I am certain if Italy was a richer country and would guarantee the Abyssinians just laws, that all the countrymen and many of the monks would all fight for them against any Abyssinian ruler, so little do they care for them.

I often used to go to the church grove and sit down under the big trees, a delightfully shady and cool place, full of the most beautiful bushes and flowers, with the music of a waterfall and the soft murmuring sound of flowing water, as two of the irrigation streams flow through it, and after leaving the enclosure are split up into many minor channels to irrigate the different large gardens on the mountain side. Their banks are lined with all sorts of ferns, large clumps of the very large maiden hair being very common, the purple and the yellow iris, forget-me-not, ranunculus, and many other water plants. Dog roses of many sorts and colours, a sulphur-coloured one being very pretty, also a very large semi-double pink one more like the old-fashioned English rose. Myrtle bushes in full flower, orange trees, limes, and a few lemon, and other sweet-scented trees made the air laden with perfume, and the banana and guna-guna plants gave the scenery an oriental look.

In the middle of a thick and shady shrubbery is situated a spring of clear water, to which the priests attribute healing and other properties, and it is a favourite bathing-place for people who suffer from various diseases. There is nothing repulsive about the place, and it is kept very clean, as the basin into which the water flows is simply a hollow in the limestone rock about six inches deep, and the water is always changing, and there is not room for more than three people to wash at a time. The place where the water bubbles out is only about six inches across, and is too narrow to allow of the water being contaminated. One day while looking at the well, the Abbi-Addi bridesmaid came with some other girls, and I sat down and had a long chat with them, and we were very merry; the bridesmaid and another of the girls talked a little Arabic, and I often used to talk to them afterwards, and I spent several pleasant

afternoons with them, and they also brought other of their friends to see the Englishman. I here gave them tea one day, and Huntley and Palmer's sweet biscuits, until Schimper and a priest came, and they all ran away. I was told by the old priest that it was not the correct thing to do to eat near the holy well. Some few days after I caught the same priest and some of his men drinking tedj at the same place, and the laugh was the other way.

In the large round Abyssinian church at the upper end of the grove Ras Areya Selassie, King Johannes' son, is buried ; such a peaceful, quiet spot, where very few people come to. The number of different sorts of beautiful birds and gorgeous butterflies that could be seen here would have delighted the heart of any naturalist, and they seemed to know it was a haven of rest where they were never disturbed, and were consequently very tame. There were also many rock and tree squirrels that used to play about the roof of the church, and climb up and down the pillars, and I was never tired of watching their gambols. The ficus trees with their ripe fruit were visited by hundreds of the large green and yellow pigeons, that get so fat and are such good table birds, and in the evening constant flocks of other wild pigeons were constantly passing over our garden on their way to roost in the grove.

Nearly every house at Macalle has a large garden with an irrigation channel to it, and there are several men who look out after the water channels and keep them in repair, and also turn on the water to the gardens when they require watering ; the small channels are blocked by sods of turf, and they only require taking out to let the water into the garden. Here the small boys are just as mischievous as they are in any other country, and they have great games with the watermen, breaking down the water channels so as to give them extra work, and I saw several of them caught after a long chase and smacked ; one sought refuge in my camp, and on it coming to my ears what the young rascal had done, I gave him up to receive his well-deserved beating.

The whole of the walls round the enclosures are built of rough stones ; they are all of very old limestone formation. A whole morning could be spent looking at the curious shells, corals and fossilized under sea life of which they are composed. This country at some remote period must have had either the sea over it or have been pushed up from it ; if the former the lower country and the valleys must

have been at such a depth that coral life could not exist, and it was only on the shallow mountain peaks that it existed. I used to talk to the Ras about the wonderful formation of Macalle and told him it must have been under the sea, at which he was not surprised, and he said he did not see why mountains should not grow the same as trees. He has many curious ideas about the stones growing (as nearly all Abyssinians have) as he had often seen them in places where they were not before, and he got out of explaining why no one ever saw them grow by saying that it was only on very dark nights that they did so. He knows nothing about erosion of the soil by age and its washing away accounting for a fine crop of fresh stones after every ploughing, and he also believes that the world is flat. I assured him that Englishmen had been all over it with the exception of the north and south poles and had never tumbled over its edge, and he rather scored off me by saying that those were perhaps the places where we should fall off. With all his ignorance of many things he is remarkably shrewd and very well informed on minor points, and if he had seen things when he was young and been properly educated, he might have been a clever man, but he is perhaps too old to learn; he believes in things like Pharaoh's chariot-wheels, dragons and old biblical impossibilities, but not in X-rays, wireless telegraphy, and other of the close of the nineteenth-century miracles.

He knew nothing about the history of his country, and had a hazy sort of idea that Abyssinia had been a very large nation at one time, and that the people of Abyssinia had conquered a great part of the world; evidently they were greater and cleverer than they were at the present, and their ignorance of the outside world was mostly owing to the Turk. He firmly believed that the ruins at Axum were built by giants and that they were nearly as tall as the monoliths found there, and that the door cut out of the rock on the side of the mountain above the sacred grove, led to a passage that went to Jerusalem, and not the one about two miles further on, that is at the bottom of the tomb, which is a much smaller one. He did not believe, however, that anyone could claim their descent from the Queen of Sheba, as he doubted whether she was Queen of Abyssinia, and there is a great deal of jealousy between the north and south on this subject.

I asked permission one day to leave Macalle and go

north, as I wanted to get across the frontier now the rains were nearly over and write all the information I had gathered about the country and send it to England, and then to visit the southern part of the country and King Menelek. To this I got a short refusal and asked whether I was not contented with Macalle and my treatment. Of course I could not say I was not, but I pleaded I was out of stores, clothes, and other things, and unless I could be allowed to send letters, my friends in England would get anxious, and that time although it seemed of little value to the Abyssinians, was considered as money in England. I was told I should have to wait until he could hear from King Menelek, who had written him and expressed a wish to see me. I pointed out it would be quicker for me to go back to Massowah and take a steamer from there to the Somali coast, than going by land, and the shortest road was not safe owing to the Azebus and Danakils, and also that it was difficult to ford the big rivers at this time of year. "Wait," was the answer, "I will call a meeting of the other head-men of my Government, and see what they have to say."

Here was another sign of weakness on his part, not having enough firmness of character to settle a little question like this without asking what minor officials had to say. I used to hear a great deal what passed from my friend the priest, that was King Johannes' father confessor, and had also acted for Ras Mangesha, but I suppose he did not give him enough absolution, and he had been superseded by a man I did not care so much about. The dwarf also used to tell me things, and I knew everything I did or said in his presence was told the Ras. I used also to get information of what the Ras did as well from him, and by employing other means I knew the Ras's movements, and what he did, just as well as he did mine.

I found out that his great wish was to get me to go to England, and extol his virtues and say what a fit person he was to succeed his father, but as I did not think him a capable man, it was the last thing I should do. He would have given me anything if I could get him recognised by the English Government. A time may come when England may have something to say in Abyssinia, and unless the Ras was backed up by a force under English or Italian officers, he would be but a broken reed to lean on.

One day I was invited to come and see him administer justice, which he does once a week, so I went and had five

hours "in court," which was held in the open air, till a perfect deluge of rain came on and stampeded judge, accusers and accused, witnesses and spectators. I never was so thankful in all my life for a shower of rain, as I was getting tired of the proceedings, of which I understood very little except what Schimper translated for me. I was sitting in a chair alongside the Ras who was reclining on a high sofa, well supported by cushions, and a man held a large red silk umbrella over him, and Schimper was sitting behind me. I wanted to bet with him that one side told more lies than the other, but he said it was impossible to tell who told the most, and it did not always depend on the number of witnesses, and that they all told the same tale that made the case go in their favour, and he asked me to pay attention to a claim about a stolen mule. The real owner had only one witness, and the man who had it in his possession brought many witnesses to prove that he had had it for years, whereas it had been with him for only a month, and he had bought it from someone who had bought it from another who had stolen it. The mule seemed to know its original owner. Next justice day in spite of the hard swearing, this case would take another phase, as the man who had lost the case said he would take one against the thief, and when the thief was brought into court he would most likely swear that he had bought it from the original owner, and would bring a witness or two to prove it. Cases like this take up a long time, and affairs of State and more important work are shelved for trifles like these.

I heard another case about moving land marks : one man accusing another of cultivating his land, and it was proved they were both in the wrong, as one had cultivated a field that did not belong to him two years before, and wanted to do so again. It was ordered that the land in dispute should be divided—a regular Solomon's baby verdict—with no dissentient party in this case. There was one murder case in which the man pleaded guilty, and provocation and blood money was accepted and the money paid up at once, otherwise he would have been handed over to the relatives of the deceased to be killed with the same sort of weapon with which the deed was perpetrated. A theft case combined with highway robbery ought to have ended with mutilation, but I will say this for the Ras he is not cruel, so he only ordered the man a beating and to be sent away from the neighbourhood, and to start a new life in a new country.

Mutilation has not the terrors that it would have in England, as some of the thieves in Abyssinia have been operated on a second and a third time, and I saw one man with his left foot being the only extremity left, and he was being fed by the priests at the church at Adowa.

There are no jails in Abyssinia, except for political offences, and these offenders are confined in the State prisons or ambas. It is nearly impossible to escape from these places, and the guardians of them as a rule are eunuchs, a custom the survival of which must have dated from the most ancient times. The men, or rather the parents of these children, have the operation performed when they are very young, as they are provided for for life by the chief officials of the kingdom, and the eunuchs can also keep their parents out of what they receive should they become poor. These ambas are very interesting places ; some of them have a single dangerous goat path leading to their summits and are blocked at the top, others are scarped and reached by a rope which is let down from the top of the plateau. Water is found on the top, and cattle in large numbers are kept, and cultivation on the larger ones is carried on to a great extent, so the inhabitants are independent of stores from below.

Ras Waldenkel and Fituari Debbub, who I mentioned before, murdered their guardians on one of these ambas and escaped, the former gave himself up and was afterwards kept at Abbi-Addi where I saw him. The latter managed to get together some of his father's (Ras Areya) followers and gave Ras Aloula a good deal of trouble before he and his adherents were shot down and killed.

The mode of justice is very patriarchal and mosaic, and of course can be seen administered at present as perhaps it existed in the earliest semi-civilised times, when courts of law were first held. The men as a rule are fine speakers and very eloquent, and while speaking they do a great deal of gesticulating with their arms, and their facial movements are very often grotesque ; they are generally laughed at if they lose their tempers. The womenkind are not a bit behind the men in talking, and also manage to hold their own very well. I get very tired of these shows, and particularly the airs that some of them give themselves, as I hate side of all sorts either in a native or in a European, but I think perhaps side in an educated European is more disgusting than in a native. The legal profession is at a discount in Abyssinia, as every man is his own lawyer. Justice is summary, and there

is a certain amount of Jedburgh law about it that I like, such a difference from the Baboo and Hindu mode of doing business.

Men are wanted in Abyssinia to rule the country, and spelt mind with the largest capital M, and whatever nation that gets hold of the country, ought to send out broad-backed, sport-loving, good-all-round gentlemen to rule the place, and not small undersized specimens of humanity, jointed together with red tape knowing only the desk and the law, and trying to rule the country by threats and not by deeds. A violent bad-tempered man would come to grief at once: but I have met several of the class of men required, with their nice quiet manner and the light velvet hand, with the unmistakable feel of the claws under the soft covering, that if they once touch a native's hand they have only to say a thing is to be done, and it is as good as finished.

After this court meeting, I was asked to come to the Ras's private apartment in his garden, and I found him alone with Ledg Mertcha, and I was told that he had received a letter from King Menelek saying that he wanted to see me and that I was to be sent to Adese-Ababa as quickly as possible. The Ras then began to commence his grievances over again and asked me to go back to Erithrea, and then to London to let the Government know how willing he would be to do anything they asked him, and how sorry he was that he had ever quarrelled with the Italians and how much he would like to be friendly with them. I had but one answer to give him, and that was what he asked was impossible, and that my business was not politics, and that I was sent to make enquiries, and report fully on Abyssinia for one of the largest newspapers in England; that I still did not understand that peace had been made, and if so, what the terms of peace were, as before war broke out that Italy had the management of Abyssinia's foreign affairs. I asked to be allowed to go away to the north as a telegram had arrived for me to return, and he knew that it was useless my writing and sending letters, as they were not allowed to pass. I told him I was out of all stores, clothes, etc., and had only enough money to last me back to Adowa, and all my things I required were at Massowah. He told me to give him an answer early next morning by Ledg Mertcha. That evening the priest came to see me and informed me that he did not think the Ras could allow me to go north, as if he let me go away, and I did not see King Menelek after all, he would be

very angry and he would think the Ras was intriguing against him, which no doubt he was and would give anything now to be under Italian protection, as if Tigré combined with the Italians, Menelek would be in a serious position and perhaps others might also rebel against him.

I did not see how I could get away north without promising things I could not do, and I was unwilling to tell a lie even to regain my freedom, so accordingly next morning I told Ledg Mertcha to tell the Ras as far as I was concerned he might send me anywhere he pleased, as I was entirely in his hands, and to thank him for what he had done for me, and to beg that I might send to Adowa for my things I had there, and also to write to Lieut. Mulazzani to say what had taken place, so that he might telegraph to England what had become of me and where I was likely to reach the sea.

Next morning I was called to a meeting at the Ras's private apartments in his garden, and on entering I found him together with Ras Aloula, Ras Hagos of Tembien, the Choum Agamie, and Hagos Taferi, Nebrid Welda Gorgis, King Menelek's agent, and my friend the chief priest of the district, Welda Mariam, father confessor to the late King Johannes, and the moment I entered I knew that they had made up their minds what they were going to do, and as Schimper was not invited, Ledj Mertcha did the interpreter and he was already seated in the circle. I must say they did the business in the nicest manner possible; we first had tedg passed round, and then a very good breakfast was brought in, and when the servants had gone out of the room King Menelek's letter was produced, and the seal showed me, and I was told the contents. It was to call me to Adese-Ababa to be present to see how the prisoners were treated.

I quote from my notes the following, 4/10/96: "'Told the assembly again that I wanted to go north, and was ordered to do so, and that I was run out of all stores and only had a little quinine and other medicines insufficient for my wants; that I knew Abyssinia so well, that I could not get away without permission; and therefore, however disagreeable to me, I had to do what they told me and not what I wanted.' The reply was, 'that Menelek's orders must be obeyed,' and that being an Englishman I was wanted as a witness to what terms Menelek would offer and accept from the Italians. I told the whole of the Council that they must be witness to my words to Ras Mangesha, and I repeated what I have written before. He replied: 'Go in peace as a friend, you are

the guest of Abyssinia, leave to-morrow morning.' I asked if this was final, and the answer was, to which the Council assented, 'Yes; have no fear, you have been shown everything in Tigré, and now see how the King has treated the Italian prisoners and what he is going to do.'"

With this I had to be content, and returned to my camp in no very righteous frame of mind, and soon after Schimper came back, who had been sent for by the Council, and he also was told that he must accompany me to the south and explain to the king what he had been doing with the Italians and aiding them in Erithrea; he was very down-hearted as his absence from his wife and children, to whom he was greatly attached, would be a very long one, and he also had been looking forward to getting north. We both agreed that it was impossible to try and make a bolt of it, as instead of being well treated we should be strictly guarded, so we both made the best of circumstances and began our small preparations for our departure next day.

Stores we had none worth speaking about, scarcely a pound of tea, a little sugar, about half a dozen tins of sardines, a few candles, and a couple of bottles of curry powder, and no rice, lentils having to take its place, and a very good substitute when they are not too old. Soap was reduced to the last piece, and the native "shipti" seed in future would have to be employed for washing our clothes. Quinine, Cockle's pills, chlorodyne and carbolic acid, with plenty of lint and bandages, still remained—without these I never travel—and with care they might last until I reached Adese-Ababa. There was consternation among the servants when they heard the news, and one of Schimper's servants immediately ran away, and we hereafter heard that he had spread the report that we had all been put in chains and sent off to King Menelek. Considering he ran away half an hour after the news was given that we were to go south he knew nothing except that we had to go to Adese-Ababa. The Italian prisoner who I had found in the Macalle bazaar about a week before and had been fattening up and cleaning in my camp, had the laugh over us as he was also to leave the next morning for the north with Ras Aloula, so he would be home in Italy long before I got to the sea-coast. He was not half a bad fellow, and was delighted when I came across him, and I believe was very grateful for all I did for him, as when he left he cried like a child. He belonged to the seventh Battalion Bersaglieri, and was taken prisoner

at Raio after General Baratieri ran away; he had a spear wound in his ankle, and a bullet in his shoulder which still remained, and the wound would not heal. It was in a horrible state when I first saw him, but after a week's dressing it got better, but would never get well until the bullet was removed; if he had been a native I would have taken it out, but I do not like doing my unskilled butcher's work on a European. The man's name was Benedetto Bistuini, a peasant, and he came from near Pisa, and I promised if I ever went there I would call and see him. He was always talking about his mother, and he was quite childish in his prattle and delight at the chance of seeing his home again. I gave him all the clothes I could spare and sent him on his way rejoicing, with a present of some lira notes and some Abyssinian jewellery, including a silver gilt cross for his mother to whom he seemed devoted.

I might have made a small fortune out of paper money, as the natives offered sometimes a hundred lira note for a dollar, but I do not believe that money got in this way does one any good, and all the paper money I got, I gave to the poor prisoners returning to Erithrea, who were very pleased to receive it. I managed to buy several medals and "crosses for valour," besides other little things, and sent them across the borders to my friend Mulazzani who returned them when possible, to the families of the officers that had been killed, who greatly appreciated the little kindness. I am sorry to say that the French in the south behaved disgracefully, buying Italian officers' hats and uniforms and dressing their servants in them, and I saw one servant belonging to a Frenchman who also sported Italian medals that he had purchased. This was a needless and gratuitous insult to a brave nation, and pained me greatly; it could do no good, and only lowered Europeans in the eyes of the natives, but this the French do not mind, and the familiarity of some of them with the natives is nothing less than indecent and deplorable.

The next morning I went to say good-bye to Ras Aloula, who was just starting; he immediately told me that he was the only one that wished me to be allowed to get my things from Adowa before being sent south, and he hoped that I would visit him again, which I promised to do if I had the opportunity. I little thought, when he gripped my hand at parting, that it was the last time I should see him, and that the hero of so many battle-fields would lose his life over a

paltry land squabble. Curiously, the next person I said good-bye to was the other principal in the dispute, Ras Hagos of Tembien, who was also killed on the same occasion. I then went to take my leave of Ras Mangesha, and I informed him that I was far from contented with his behaviour, and when he asked me to let the English know how fond he was of them, I told him I should tell the truth. This Ras belongs to the jelly-fish order, with no backbone. I have no doubt he could be moulded into anything, and if backed up by a European power, would do everything he was told, and perhaps, therefore, might be a better puppet to run than a stronger-minded man; there can be no doubt about his parentage, as he is exactly like his father. His mother, who is a venerable, good-looking old lady, was a sadly gay lot after the king got tired of her, as she has two other sons and a daughter by three different husbands, all of them big men in the country. One of the half-brothers of the Ras called upon me every day and was a great nuisance; he does not bear the best of characters, and has been on an amba on several occasions.

The head of our guard or escort to Adese-Ababa has the grade of chief candle-bearer to the Ras, an honorary title; he is a great courtier, supposed to be a brave fighting man, a tremendous dandy, and smells like the perfumery shop in Bond Street, and I now never pass this place without thinking of him, but as he boasts and talks too much I do not like him. I was sorry to part with my friend the priest, who had been most kind, and a few days before parting, when in the churchyard with some other priests, he presented me with the cross that he always wore round his neck, and it proved most useful to me on many occasions. I asked him to inform the Ras of the loss of my miniature medals, that had been stolen, as I thought by a soldier, and some months afterwards they arrived in London, all broken, but it only shews that priests have their use, and that there is a certain amount of law and honesty in the country.

CHAPTER XIV

SOCOTA AND WAAG PROVINCE

AFTER the events described in my last chapter, I got away for my long journey to Shoa about noon, many of my friends, among them being the dwarf, seeing me out of the town ; this custom of accompanying people when they set out on a journey is just as common in Abyssinia as in other parts of the East. At first we struck due south to join the main southern road of eastern Abyssinia, that leads *via* the Amba-Alagi pass to Ashchangi and then to Dildi and Embac to Yejju, part of which was followed by the English expedition to Magdala. It was on Monday the 5th of October that I left Macalle, and it was not till Wednesday the 18th of November that I eventually arrived at Adese-Ababa, being forty-five days on the road including stoppages, a journey that I ought to have accomplished easily in eighteen. I should have enjoyed the voyage immensely had I been better prepared, but I was without many absolute necessities required when travelling in a country of this description, and I shall now have to dip into my diary very frequently to let my readers have full particulars of all that I went through.

Instead of Ras Mangesha doing me a really bad turn by sending me the way he did and putting me under the charge of his favourite candle-bearer, the dandy Hailou, and his escort of soldiers, I am now most thankful to him for giving me the opportunity of seeing so much of the country under circumstances which will seldom fall to the lot of few travellers, and to gain a further knowledge of the people and the way they are treated by soldiers travelling on business of the State.

About an hour after leaving the town I was met by some mounted soldiers coming from the south, who would not allow me to proceed and stopped the part of my escort that were with me ; soon after Hailou arrived with the rest of the escort and Hadgi-Ali, who had remained behind to procure provisions from the market, and to my delight he had been

able to procure some more wax matches of Italian make and one very small piece of toilet soap which perhaps weighed about 3 ounces. After a long confabulation between Hailou and the head of the soldiers, we were told that the Azebu Gallas were raiding near Amba-Alagi and Aschangi, and the road was not safe. Hailou and the soldiers that we had met returned to Macalle, and we were sent by a road that led to the south-south-west.

The country was lovely and the road led down the centre of a large grass valley with many small rills all running into a main brook, which ran towards the Ghiva river; the crops of barley on the higher parts of the hills were ripe and being cut, while on the lower slopes the fields of grain were changing colour, and on the lowest of all the corn was in full ear and of a vivid bright green. In the valley round the streams the ground was clothed with a luxurious carpet of good grass, in which large flocks of sheep, goats, horses and mules and many young horned cattle were grazing, but very few cows and bullocks. The young stock had nearly all been purchased in the Danakil country (and were of the long horned species) and that had not suffered nearly so much from the rinderpest as the high lands. The only disease now amongst the animals in the Macalle district seemed to be among the mules, curiously enough the fathers and mothers of this cross not suffering nearly so much, although the cross is supposed to be the more hardy.

The road we followed after about eight miles out from Macalle commences to rise gradually, and runs along the spurs of the mountains *vis-à-vis* to the range on which the towns of Chelicut and Antalo are situated. An excellent view of the now nearly ruined town of Chelicut is obtained, with its groups of abandoned houses in all stages of decay, and the broken-down walled enclosures with their magnificent trees of all sorts, and its very large sycamore figs for which the town was famed. The population now only consists of a few hundreds, whereas, from the number of the buildings and the large area which it covers, it must have sheltered a population of several thousands. Most of the people have left Chelicut for Macalle and its surrounding villages. Antalo is also nearly deserted by its inhabitants, they having left it for the villages on the east and west when the Italians advanced in 1895, and then again when the army of King Menelek advanced on Adowa. I am told that as soon as the present crop is gathered many of the people will return

and repair their houses which were partially destroyed by being unroofed, and the wood burnt by the southern soldiers on their homeward journey. We made our night's halting place at the choum's village in the parish of Adi-Ki-Kolfé, the last hour's march in the dark over irrigation channels, into which we blundered and got thoroughly wet through and muddy. We were also eaten up by mosquitos, the first time I have felt them very bad in Abyssinia.

The villages were surrounded by a slight ditch and zareeba, always a sign that the country is not as secure as it might be, and we were kept outside the village for some little time while the tenants were removing the thorn bushes with which the entrance was guarded. Hailou had not arrived, nor had the choum, who had been marketing at Macalle, and when they did, they were both slightly drunk. It seems that the farmers in this country are not unlike their brethren in some parts of England, that in former times made market day an excuse for having a "high old time." It was ten o'clock before I got the tent pitched in the court-yard, and soon after a bad thunderstorm burst over us, which lasted for several hours with very heavy rains. Very little sleep and all the servants sitting up and shivering under the flaps of the tent; Schimper and Hadgi Ali inside the tent with me, as the former had been washed out; Hailou, the choum and the soldiers quarrelling all night about food supplies. In the early morning, at sunrise, the whole lower landscape was enveloped in mist, and most of the mountains had either white clouds on their slopes or capped with them. All hands drying things, and the upper cover of the tent, which was entirely wet through and too heavy to pack, spread out to dry. The weight of the tent increases at least 30 per cent. when entirely wet, and it cannot be folded properly, and makes more than a mule load.

One of the pleasures of travelling in Abyssinia is that it is all daylight work; our arriving late last night was because of the detention on the road, and not making an early start. I know many travellers who will insist on making night marches; the consequence is, their opinion on a country is nearly worthless, and I very much doubt, if they had to retravel the way by themselves during the day, that they could find their road.

Since I have travelled in Abyssinia I have observed every point that is to be seen, and I could find my way about anywhere in the north without the aid of the compass.

I had a long talk to the old choum who was very angry with Hailou and his escort, as they had been helping themselves to everything they wanted, and I explained to him that it was nothing to do with me what the Abyssinian soldiers did. What I and my servants, including Mr Schimper, required should be paid for or an equivalent given, and that I was very sorry for him and his people, that they had to put up with these exactions. I got from him the same information as I had heard before from many others, that there was no ending to their taxation. It was not the annual tax in the shape of tribute that they complained of, but it was the everlasting feeding officials and their escorts who were not content with what they were supposed to have given them, but took what they liked. It was, of course, at the present moment more difficult to satisfy these demands, as during the past year they had been looted by the Italian soldiery and on two occasions by the troops belonging to King Menelek on their journey to and from Adowa. Consequently they had but small supplies of everything until their growing crops were ripe, which although very good were smaller in area than formerly, owing to the death of so many of their ploughing bullocks not enabling them to put a large acreage under cultivation, and much of the tilling had also to be done by hand.

The road from Adi-Ki-Kolfé runs at first up hill for about four miles in a south-south-west direction, when a ridge is reached which gives a splendid view over the basin of the Samra river which this ridge divides from the waters of the Ghiva that are now left behind. From the top of the ridge is stretched out the whole panorama of mountains, commencing with those above Antalo, next the high peaks of Amba-Alagi with its out-jutting western spur that divides the drainage of the Samra and Tserrare rivers, then fading away in the distance the far-off blue mountains of Lasta and Waag to the south and the southern part of the Semien mountains to the west. It was a beautifully clear day, and several local thunderstorms could be seen coming up from the south, obliterating for a short time a part of the landscape and making other portions, on which the sun was shining, bright in comparison to the dark shadows thrown by the black clouds and their downpour of heavy tropical rain. The country was most fertile and covered with crops being harvested, and the road ran between fields of barley in which people were working.

Two hours before reaching Samre, a large gorge of one of the tributaries of the Samra river is come to, one of the top of the sides is followed, which is covered with thick mimosa and other scrubs. This gorge is a favourite place for robbers and malcontents against Ras Mangesha's rule. All malcontents, as I mentioned before, take to plundering, so as to bring the ruler of the province into disrepute with his subjects; a peculiar sort of revenge, on the basis of, "You do me harm, I know I cannot retaliate; but I will go and do harm to someone else, who may be a friend of yours"; it is bad for the man who is retaliated on.

The escort that is with me consists of twenty-two men and Hailou; all armed with rifles, swords and shields, here closed up, and two men were sent on as an advanced guard. We proceeded into the scrub, when all at once a rifle-shot was fired, and everyone began to shout and give instructions. As soon as things commenced to quiet down and the escort made inquiries into what had happened, it was found that one of them had let his rifle off by accident. Hailou knocked him about with a stick and abused him and told him to be more careful in the future, and we resumed our march. What with the rifle-shot and the shouting re-echoing among the rocks, the only things that were scared were the monkeys who also began shouting and hurrying off up the cliffs, and a small herd of oribi antelopes would have given me a good shot had I had a rifle with me. I asked Hailou if he was afraid of the monkeys, and he rather scored off me with his reply which was, No, he was not afraid of monkeys, but they were also wicked thieves that lived by stealing like the bad men he had to guard me against.

About the last six miles march into Samre is, next to the view from Abi-Addi, the most lovely part of Tigré that I have yet seen, embracing as it does the grand panorama of heights and small mountains of every shape; the flat-topped Ambas being most numerous, and the grey white of the limestone rocks interspersed with the red sandstone, partly covered with a strange vegetation, in which giant sycamore figs predominate, makes up a charming picture, and a civilisation is given to the scene by numerous villages surrounded by cultivation of all sorts, including tropical, sub-tropical and cold country plants. On turning round and looking up the gorge just before Samre village is reached, the picture is a red sandstone foreground, covered with a luxurious vegetation; a very deep depression with castellated red sides with

white quartz seams, and capped with trees in full foliage, and a background of a height of wood, field and pasture-land, down which streams are running and plunging in waterfalls into the gorge below.

The market town of Samre is built on a tableland projection from the mountain, and has steep sides round it, with the exception from the north, where it joins the main road; at its further extremity are the immense ruins of old Ras Hailou's palace. He was father to the late Ras Hagos of Tembien, and was related to all the best blood of Tigré and Amhara. Part of the walls of the main palace are still standing, as well as the surrounding wall, which contained the lesser buildings; the area enclosed must have been at least sixteen acres, defended from the market by a deep ditch and high wall, with a strong gateway with overhanging guard house; the whole enclosure being absolutely impregnable, except through starvation, to any force except armed with artillery, which the Abyssinians in former days did not possess.

The market green is about five hundred yards long by about two hundred yards wide, and is surrounded by the houses and compounds of the inhabitants. Samre in olden days being one of the most important central positions of Abyssinia: doing a very large wholesale trade for all the commodities produced by and imported to the country. Its glory has departed, and Socota has taken its place, and it is now reduced to a Saturday market instead of a daily one. What with the mounds of rubbish that are now covered with a plant vegetation, and the traces of old ruins that form the foundation of the present dwelling houses; this place may have a history which excavations alone would bring to light. It is a most fertile centre, blessed by nature with a good climate, a splendid soil and a never failing water supply, and from the facilities it offers for defence, its ruins and size, it must have played a most important part in the annals of ancient and fairly modern Abyssinia.

We encamped among the ruins of Ras Hailou's palace, which with the exception of the late King Johannes' palace at Macalle, where Ras Mangesha now lives is the largest building that I have as yet seen in the country. Our escort encamps all round us, so near as to be quite offensive, and there is no doubt that, although not actually prisoners, we are as near that state as possible; or perhaps putting it in another form, we are free people who cannot do what we like,

as we are perpetually watched, and not allowed to speak to the natives, except in the presence of one or more soldiers. It is a blessing that Schimper and Hadji-Ali talk English as we can speak together without being understood and we may get a chance of getting some news away north, despite of Ras Mangesha and his advisers; and if I could only get into communication with Ras Aloula, all would be well and I might through him be able to get my supplies at Adowa forwarded on to me.

We had a fine and cold night, but at daylight it commenced to rain with distant thunder, and kept on till about seven o'clock, when the sun came out, and we commenced to dry things, the tent always having to be beaten and shaken to get the water out of it, so as to dry it quickly. I try to get out of Hailou where we are to camp next, but he will never give any of us information, and up till now the soldiers who form the guard are not unfriendly, but are not communicative and are already getting into a country they know little about. Hailou seems to know every village, and the conntrymen to be more or less frightened of him.

The road all the way from Samre towards the south-west which we followed, was through cultivated land and the sides of the hills were also thickly covered with crops of maize; many villages, small and large, were to be seen, and they showed no signs of having been looted, and when we arrived, after a twelve mile march, at Temessesa, our halting place, I was told that this district had escaped, owing to its being so far from the high roads, the terrible destruction caused by the Italian irregular troops, and also by Menelek's army, both on its way north and south. The army from Godjam and the Amharans did not come nearer than Fenaroa. With the exception of having suffered from the cattle disease, the people were the best off of all the places that I had hitherto seen; the fields shewed that they had a great deal of attention paid to them, and they were free from weeds and the dividing ridges were well kept. The crops consisted of maize, dhurra, wheat, barley, on the higher lands, dagusa, tef, noug, peas, beans, lentils, gram, and round the villages a little tobacco; potatoes, tomatoes, pumpkins, gourds, bananas, besides other useful things were in profusion; everything was absurdly cheap and for one piece of salt and a dollar I got several chickens, some eggs, milk, any vegetables I liked to take, and a very fat, cut goat.

My keeper and his soldiers immediately commenced having quarrels with the choum or chief of the district, who absolutely refused to obey the orders of Ras Mangesha, as he said he was under the orders of the Waag Choum Gangul of Waag. We poor prisoners had our food in peace, and as I saw some of the escort had had nothing all day, and that they were hungry, I told them they might feed with my Abyssinians; among them was the chief petty officer; filling his stomach for him and giving him a small bit of American stick tobacco, entirely won him over, and from that night he began to get quite friendly, and most useful he proved on many occasions after leaving Socota. Hailou got nothing for himself that night, and at dawn we started from the village, or more properly speaking, district of Temessesa, for a long march, but where our destination was to be, no one had the vaguest notion; but it was somewhere there, as Hailou said, pointing in, as nearly as possible, a south-south-west direction.

The road after half an hour's march leads into thick bush and about seven miles out a small stream is reached called the Mai-Ambessa, which is followed for about five miles; at the point where the stream is struck, there is a good view of Fenaroa, situated on high land some six miles to the west. The main road, from Adowa and Axum to the south, runs through Abbi-Addi and Fenaroa to Socota; about eight miles further on the Samra river is come to, which has to be forded, and another six miles further on, the Tserrare is reached that has also to be crossed. These fords are also on the high road and at the crossing of the Samra, Fenaroa bears due north and the road to Socota goes due south. The further bank of the Tserrare was reached after seven hours good marching, nearly all the way down hill; after entering the bush in the morning, not a vestige of civilisation or cultivation is met, with the exception of a distant view of Fenaroa; the country is all covered with scrub and mimosa jungle, and is supposed to be during the rains most unhealthy. Elephant, lion, Kudoo and Defassa are then common, having been driven out of the Tacazze valley by the floods. I saw nothing *en route*, except a few small Duiker and Oribi antelopes.

These two rivers are very pretty and their breadth about one hundred and one hundred and thirty yards respectively; during the rainy season they carry an immense volume of water to the main stream of the Tacazze. The banks are not steep and

the beds of the rivers are of small water-worn stones, not at all unlike our northern rivers, such as the North Tyne. On leaving the Tserrare we followed a road that went off towards the south-west for about six miles, and then followed west-south-west for about another eight miles, when we sighted some houses and cultivation. From near Temessesa to Deera is ten hours good marching without any sign of cultivation except immediately around Fenaroa, which was at least six miles off. We arrived at Deera at six p.m. after eleven hours quick marching over a good road, not having met half a dozen people during the whole day. As soon as we arrived a thunder and rain storm came on, and as my tent had not come up I had to go into a house for shelter; it left off raining at about eight o'clock, and still the tent and part of the baggage had not arrived. We got plenty of milk, and eggs, and chickens by payment, and had a decent supper which we all badly wanted after our fatiguing day's march, it being very hot near the river and in the thick bush as we got no breeze. The bugs and fleas were something awful at this place, and neither Schimper nor I could sleep as we were perfectly devoured by them; so at about midnight we both turned out and sat over a fire in the courtyard and took off our things and bug-hunted; we managed to rid ourselves of them and made a large bag; the fleas, although to me they are the more troublesome, did not so much matter, as they went off of their own accord hopping back to the house.

I shall long remember the night spent at Deera for its discomforts and other reasons; one of them being the row I had with three of my Somali servants who had stayed behind and loitered on the road with the baggage; they had determined to desert and try to get back to the north, as they did not like to face the journey south. They also feared the soldier escort and the daily rows between them and the villagers; and they no doubt considered the thick country we had just passed through was a sample of the rest of the road and was a good place to hide in. I could not blame them altogether, and there was a good deal of truth, however unpalatable it was to me, in what they said, namely, that we were all prisoners, and one the worst charactered said, yes, and all prisoners are equal. This I could not allow, and he found out that I could still maintain order. The three Somalis were called by Hailou and were told that if they loitered again they would be chained and beaten, and they were afterwards better in this respect, but they gave

endless trouble in other things, and Hadji Ali had no command over them until our troubles ended at Adese-Ababa.

We were not sorry to leave Deera on account of our being so uncomfortable, but the people were very kind and the women very curious; some of them had never seen a European before. Their houses were of the ordinary Abyssinian round shape, and the villages only slightly protected with thorn hedges, showing that the country was a peaceful one and that the hedge was only to keep out hyenas and jackals. Our road from Deera was up-hill and in a south-easterly direction, and about six miles out we passed the pretty settlements of Agou Nusta; we then went up a very bad pass which took us nearly an hour, and struck the direct road to Socota, which we had diverged from at the crossing of the Tserrare; the deviation had taken just seven hours marching, and the object was to get rations for our escort, which they had not succeeded in procuring.

We now struck the fertile district of Kulusheman and turned off the high road to the principal village which we reached at about 1.30 p.m., after having marched only five and a quarter hours. This village was about one and a half miles from the high road, and was very nicely situated, being in the centre of a large area of cultivated land; with the usual miscellaneous crops in all stages of maturity, the maize already harvested. The whole population were at work in the fields, and many of them left their work to see the strangers—here a white man was not such a curiosity, as they had seen a good many Italian officers and soldiers prisoners of the different chiefs that had taken this road on the return from Adowa.

I soon got my tent pitched and enjoyed a quiet afternoon until sunset, when quarrels took place; they commenced with a fight between two of my Abyssinian servants, one a Tigréan, the other from Amhara, the two countrymen hate each other and they evidently wanted to see which was the better man. Schimper wanted to separate them but I told him to sit down and watch, as there would never be peace between them until the question was settled. The fight took place some fifty yards off, so they did not disturb me, and they were a great deal too intent to see whether anybody was watching them; the row lasted about ten minutes, and by the time they had finished they had "nodings on" all their clothes in bits. Feet, hands, nails and teeth had all been used, and they were a pretty sight. After they had recovered their breath

I told them that the next time they fought I should fight too, and that they must now be friends. They then kissed each other like two naughty children would do that have had a fight over a toy, and wept on each other's shoulders like Frenchmen, and then turned to their work and I had no more bother with them for days after. The Tigréan got the worst of the encounter but was still game, and as he was in better condition and had not suffered from the famine like the other who had not long recovered. Hardly had this combat been finished when another commenced between some of my escort and the villagers, the former I was glad to see got driven out of some houses by the women who were only armed with burning sticks which they were not afraid of using, and they make most persuasive weapons; when the men were driven out of the enclosure, the thorn barrier closing the entrance was fastened and the inhabitants left in peace. I went and congratulated the females on their bravery and we had a long chat together; after they got over their first shyness I obtained from them everything I wanted, such as eggs, milk, pumpkins, green-peas, etc.

The escort had another row at a hamlet about one hundred and fifty yards off, but with the men this time, and it was as much as Hailou and the choum could do to keep order and prevent bloodshed; rifles were loaded by each side, and swords drawn, and Schimper wanted to interfere; but I read him a lecture about keeping neutral, and leaving our escort to themselves, as if we joined in, we should only get into trouble, and as long as we were friendly to all the villagers it was not likely that they would do us any harm, as long as we behaved ourselves, and did not want things by force.

My experience has always been that it is a very rare thing to find the Abyssinian peasantry hard to get on with, they are not thieves or brigands, and if treated properly will do the stranger no harm, and it is a fact that all foreign travellers that have had disturbances and been ill-treated in the country, have had no one to blame but themselves; by trying to do things which they would not dare attempt to do in any other country. These rows have generally taken place by entering the houses, pulling the women about, and taking things by force, or offering unfair payment for things supplied; or as the case in question, by travelling with a rascally escort like ours, and backing them up in their exactions on the villagers. It may be a very nice custom to

march through Abyssinia with a king's order for daily supplies, and it may save a lot of expense and bother, but it is not what any Englishman should demean himself by doing. I have never done so, and have paid for everything I have taken, or given more than an equivalent, and the consequence is I could return to any part of the country that I have visited before, and not only be again well received, but find a hearty welcome.

We left Kulusheman, after a fine night, at 7.15 on a beautiful morning like that of an English summer; the fields and hedges being lovely, the latter covered with jessamine, dog-roses and white clematis in full bloom. The course followed was due south, and the high mountain on the further side of Socota being south 10° west, the road was all up hill; after about six hours march, during which we travelled about fifteen miles, we arrived at Socota. Nine miles from Kulusheman, the river Mai Luma is reached, which is greatly used for irrigating the land on its banks. This river has its rise on the highland plateau of Socota, and tumbles in cascades and waterfalls down a large gorge with perpendicular cliffs, that shut the environs of Socota from the lower country. Down this gorge are several catchments and lower terraces, along which irrigation channels have been made, so the river is well under control, and is made to serve a very large area of land. From the top of the road that runs to Socota plateau, a good view of the north is obtained, and the different points of the road which we have followed from Macalle. Amba Alagi pass, Antalo mountains, the Gheralta range, Abbi-Addi and the Semien group. Samre is north 20° east, and the Tacazze valley, skirting the eastern borders of the Semien province is plainly visible. A most perfect panorama of the whole country is obtained, with its pleasing foreground of irrigated cultivation.

The more I see of this wonderful land, with its good climate in which English men, women and children could thrive, the more I wish it was blessed with a stable government, so that its population might be happy and improve their position, which from centuries of misrule has not been an enviable one. Personally I have no wish to break the tenth commandment, but nationally I do covet the country, and I think it would be the best thing that could happen, both for England, Italy and for Abyssinia, as within a very short time, under a firm rule, the country would be happy and make the greatest strides towards a high class

of civilisation, and Abyssinia would be one of the brightest jewels of the English crown. I believe also that England is the only nation that will ever do this country justice, and be able to make use of the undoubted native talent that exists; which only wants leading and a good example shown like our clever Indian Civil Service officials would give, to make it one of the happiest countries that the sun shines on.

Socota is a fine large town with great possibilities for the future; it is built on three hills rising from a plateau, surrounded by mountains opening slightly towards the high mountain (which I here find is called Muscollo), and which has been such a conspicuous landmark in the southern landscape since leaving Macalle. My protector Hailou would not tell me its name en route, and I did not rely on what the second in command told me, as our friendship was not of long enough duration to warrant confidence in him; he having been fed by me on several occasions, and promised a backsheesh at the end of the voyage, has entirely taken up his abode nightly near my tent, and when it is set sleeps under the flap with my servants. He has already promised Hadgi-Ali that after Socota he will tell us everything, but if he is too attentive before, he may be sent back from there to Macalle, and he wants to go to Adese Abata as some one owes him money, and there is also a young lady there that likes him very much.

About an hour after our arrival the Waag Choum Gangul returned; he had been away superintending some harvest operations. We could see him coming with his large escort and numbers of followers a long way off, and I went forward to meet him; he got off his mule and welcomed me to his town and gave me the choice of a house in town, or camping in the large enclosure some way outside where he kept his stud animals. I chose the latter, as the town houses are always noisy, and bugs and fleas in abundance, and in the open country it is free from them. The enclosure we were given to camp in was of oval form and about eight acres in extent; in the centre were two very good stables and a big round house with several smaller ones for the head official and his grooms. It was surrounded by a turf wall and poles about ten feet high, laced together with grass rope, and as there was only one guarded entrance to it, we could have what we greatly wanted, privacy for ourselves and security for our animals, which could graze in the enclosure all night. They had already done fairly hard work since

leaving Macalle, and had not had as much grass as they ought to have had, and short rations of barley on three nights; during the time of this mule disease, which is still prevalent, it does not do to let animals run down as they are perhaps more liable to infection.

The title Waag-Choum is a very old one and dates back for several centuries; this title and Choum Agamie are the only instances, which I know of, where the word Choum is used for a governor of a large district. There are choums of every large parish, and the word is equivalent to chief; there are choums also of many villages, but the minor title of the chief of a village is generally Chicka. Waag Choum Gangul impressed me greatly by his looks; he is a tall man, nearly six feet in height, of athletic build, broad shoulders, and by the way he dismounted and mounted his mule must be very agile; he was most civil and said that he was very busy and would I call upon him the next day when I was rested. We had just put up our tents and preparing dinner when a procession of people bearing a present of food arrived; it consisted of two immense fat cut goats, 350 flat breads of different sorts, many being of the best white tef, some excellent tedj and some for the servants of an inferior description. We had had none since leaving Macalle; a large jar of white honey, weighing perhaps thirty pounds; some chickens and eggs, and six made dishes from his own kitchen; all of them very nice, but rather too much red pepper in some of them for my liking, and a large sack of barley for the mules.

The man who brought them down could talk Arabic and the Tobadeet language, spoken by the eastern Soudanese, that curiously enough is known to a good many people in this district; he told us that these rations were for ourselves and not for the escort, and as we had already on the road purchased a fat lamb and some eggs and chickens, and Schimper had shot two francolin, we were in luck's way as far as food was concerned. Hadgi-Ali had also got some green peas, potatos, broad beans, bananas and limes, and we all of us had a splendid dinner; the servants feasting well on into the night, which was a fine one after a thunder and rain storm that lasted for about two hours just at sunset. I mention our food supplies as an example of what the country produces, and what a difference there is in the various districts. Sometimes it is the long feast, and at others a long fast and one's belt has to be taken in.

The next morning, just as I had finished a big breakfast, the Waag-Choum sent down asking Schimper and I to come and see him and have breakfast with him; this we of course had to do, and so I put on my best clothes and proceeded to his house. The buildings which he occupies cover an immense extent, and they and the courtyards are kept very clean and neat; quite a superior place and more order shown than in any other establishment that I have as yet seen in Abyssinia, and a great contrast to the untidy way Ras Mangesha keeps his houses and their surroundings. The principal building is one of three stories high, of square shape, longer than it is broad. It was built about 250 years ago, and evidently designed by some one who had served under the Portuguese, or who had travelled in other countries.

It was entirely devoid of architectural beauties, the walls being perfectly plain, and the windows of lattice work like that in Mahomedan countries and closed with common shutters. The roof was flat, with a slight protecting parapet. At the same time as this house was built, adjoining to it a very large ordinary Abyssinian round house was constructed, with rather good wood-work; the shape of the windows and doors being like those found in the superior houses of Adowa that have already been described. The uprights to the roof that formed a circle, had been closed in and were partly used as stables and partly as storehouses. The Waag-Choum Gangul did not use this as a dwelling-house like many other of the leading men in Abyssinia, but only as a waiting-room where people remained until they were ushered into his presence.

The other two big houses were of the same construction as the latter, but their interiors were differently arranged; one was empty with the exception of an angareb or native bedstead, and was used as a justice and meeting room, and the other had two portions between the outer wall and inner circle of uprights supporting the high domed roof enclosed; a raised platform between them, taking up about a third of the area on which were several native bedsteads with cushions and covers of different coloured silk, and the floor was covered with Persian and Indian carpets. Silk curtains covered the three doors, and the walls which were nicely plastered were of a light yellow, the usual hooks made out of cow horns were let into the wall, from which hung silver shields of good workmanship, handsome swords with gold and silver decorations, and guns and rifles of many patterns,

from the latest kind of breechloader to the old flint lock; one of which I am nearly certain was of ancient Portuguese manufacture, and had been converted from the old match lock by having a hammer and striker added by some native armourer. Had it not been for the modern fire-arms on the walls, one might have fancied oneself back at a middle-age epoch, and in the presence of people that lived at that date.

Waag Choum Gangul was most polite, and said that several of his people who had been servants to his father, had seen me at Adowa, when they were there with King Johannes in 1884. Breakfast was served, and we all sat on cushions round a small low table, like those used by the Turks and Arabs, and the food was also served a great deal more after their fashion than Abyssinian. Thank goodness we had no raw meat; the dishes were well cooked and clean, consisted of stews and broils, and the tedj was excellent, clear and nearly sparkling. Coffee was served in small cups, the same as in Egypt, and small glasses of native spirit which was very old and sweet and more like a liqueur. I was told it had been made many years ago, when the Choum's father was a young man, and the bottle from which it was taken was one of a bye-gone age. After the meal was over I was invited to smoke, and at first refused, but as the Choum's cousin lighted a cigarette I did the same.

We sat talking for over two hours, the party assembled consisted of the Choum, his brother, a cousin, a priest that had been to Jerusalem, and talked Arabic very well; another relation who acted as the Choum's secretary, who had also been across the border; were perhaps as enlightened and intelligent a lot as could be found anywhere in Abyssinia, and compared most favourably with Ras Mangesha and his set. Our conversation was mostly about the different campaigns commencing with that against the Egyptians; the fight at Metemneh against the Dervishes, and the late Italian campaign. The Choum's troops had been with Menelek's, and made the attack on the Italian left wing under General Albertone, and they suffered very considerably both in killed and wounded. The Choum told me that in his archives in the church he could trace his family's descent for over three hundred years, and that the square three-storied house in which he lived, was built about two hundred and fifty years ago by an ancestor, and if I liked at any time to go through the archives I might; unfortunately I had not the time, as the next day I had to leave on my journey south,

Hailou protesting that we ought not to have remained the night at Socota, but the Waag Choum insisted that we should stay and rest and accept of his hospitality. He knew very well that I had nothing in return to give him, and yet he treated me in a most princely manner, and it is not right of some travellers saying that all Abyssinians are greedy and grasping, and give an egg so that they may receive a brood of chickens, or a glass of milk so that they may receive a herd of cows.

In the afternoon after my return from the Choum, visitors of all sorts called on me, from them I was enabled to glean a lot of information about the country; they all seemed to like the present ruler, but some regrets were expressed that old Waag Choum Bru, the present Choum's father, was in exile. King Menelek and he could not agree, and as Gangul had lived with King Menelek for many years, he was given his father's position, and the old man was sent to Shoa. One of my visitors was an old slave woman from Darfar, who knew Slaten Pasha very well, when he was governor of that province; she was taken prisoner by the Mahdi's followers and brought to Khartoum, from there she left with her master for Galabat, and followed him into Abyssinia with the force under the Emir Abou Angar, and was present at the battle of Gondar. She was taken prisoner by the Abyssinians belonging to Ras Areya at the battle of Metemneh where King Johannes was slain, and was present at the small fight when the king's body was taken, and Ras Areya was killed. She then found her way across country to Socota, where she married and was now living, after having undergone such terrible experiences, happily in the town which she hoped never to leave. Her only complaint was that it was very cold, and she had to wear more clothes than in the Soudan.

On the Monday morning, the Waag Choum again sent for me at an early hour to have breakfast, and after the meal was over I said good-bye, thanking him for all his kindness to me and his princely hospitality; he was most cordial, and asked me if I was ever in Abyssinia again to come and pay him another visit, and that he had given orders that I should be well treated in his district. On my arrival at camp, I found more bread and food had been sent down, making four times that I had received supplies from him, also honey and other things for my journey.

I had plenty of opportunities of having a good look at

the town. It consists of over six hundred good sized houses besides many small ones, none of them in ruins, giving five inhabitants only for each house, this would give a population of 3000; which is under what it really contains. The enclosures round the houses were larger than in most towns, and the whole place was kept in excellent order, and very clean; all dead animals for a wonder were removed out of the town, where they were soon eaten by the dogs, hyenas, jackals, crows, ravens and vultures of which there were large quantities. The houses were all of stone, many of them square shaped and well built, and the town was well wooded, there being many very large sycamore fig trees of several kinds. Some of the gardens were nicely kept, and produced plenty of vegetables of many descriptions, and the fruits consisted of the apricot, peach, grape, banana, lime, orange, pomegranate of large size, and shadock, thick hedges of the "shipti" or soap plant divided the enclosures, and I was very pleased to be able to purchase a large bag of its dried seed to wash our clothes, as my last piece of European washing soap was finished.

The market days at Socota are Tuesday and Wednesday of each week, and by the area of the market place, it must be visited by many people, and a large trade done, not only with local towns, but with those of Lasta, Beghemeder, Semien, Tembien and Enderta. The town possesses three fine churches, the oldest dedicated to the Virgin Mary, dating back for several centuries; the second was built by the Waag Choum Bru; and the third nearly finished by the present Choum; the last is on a hill about a mile out of the town, and already plots of ground are being taken up round it for building purposes.

We got away in a heavy shower of rain on Monday, the 12th October, at ten o'clock. I give the date as former travellers talk about the rains finishing in September. Our escort in a fuddled state and very dirty, not having recovered from the effects of their two nights' drunk—several of them have been beaten by Hailou, and one of them is tied to one of Schimper's servants; they both having opened fire with their rifles at some imaginary enemy during the night, waking us all up and making us get out of our warm tents into the cold to see what was the matter. Hailou looks no end of a swell this morning with his hair replaited and with fresh grease over it, and by the scent, which women as a rule only use, he has been where he should not have been.

We took a road leading to the south-east, which is the direct route to Dildi, and about three miles out of the town got on the edge of the saucer-shaped plateau of Socota which appears as if mother nature had taken a bite out of the rim in one place so as to allow the drainage of the numerous springs to escape ; near the broken part the town is built, and from the point we are standing on looks quite an imposing place. The big isolated range of Muscollo can now be seen, and its volcanic origin determined. When the world was made and these terrible discharges of matter took place it must have been desperately hot while the surface was cooling, and till this present day there are several warm springs that have not had time to cool, one of which runs past a perfect giant of a fig tree which must by its size be several centuries old. Under the shade of this tree I had my lunch after having marched for about four hours from Socota and having done twelve miles. Hailou came up to me here and turned us off from our due south-east course to one south-west and halted at a village in the Welleh valley about three miles off the road. The Welleh valley comes from the Muscollo range and gradually slopes, ever getting wider to the Tserrare river, the direction being west 20° south, to east 20° north.

Nearly all the villages here have a name, and this evening from where we are encamping there are forty-three groups of houses in sight averaging from twenty to thirty buildings, so it is impossible to map them all. The whole country here is superbly cultivated and irrigated, and the crops are very fine. While the famine and failure of the crops were going on in other parts of Abyssinia they had plenty, and not only sold great quantities of grain but had even a surplus left when their next crops were ready to harvest. There can be no doubt that the volcanic soil and plenty of springs to irrigate with makes this part of Abyssinia so fertile. The cattle plague was very bad, and the head man of the village, who was a very well informed person and most civil to me, told me that I ought to have seen the country before the cattle plague as every acre of the ground was then made use of, and he pointed out to me where the cultivation extended to. His females had never seen a European before, and I was examined as if I was a curious animal. I think my red hair had a great attraction for them, also the whiteness of my skin ; a pretty little girl about four years old hid behind her father and took peeps at me, and screamed when I tried

to catch hold of her; some of my small stock of white sugar enabled me to make friends, and by evening time she was sitting on my lap and romping with me as if we had known each other for a long time. We got here everything we wanted, and all things are so cheap that a traveller can live for a very little.

We left early next morning after an excellent breakfast which we took beside the camp-fire, it being quite cold. Alas! both our thermometers are broken so we cannot find the temperature, Schimper's being broken at Socota; we again struck south-east, getting on to the main road in about an hour's time, our last night's deviation being the fault of Hailou who should have gone to the big village on the road for his rations and not to the one we went to, where he and the escort got nothing. Two of the escort have entirely taken up their quarters with me and are very useful, helping to pitch camp and bring wood and water; it gives my Somalis less to do, and they have not much work at any time. About seven miles further on we got out of the Welleh valley and began going up over a low spur that comes away from the Muscollo group, and on passing which we opened out another small valley of Ruvarea, where we halted at a village to allow our escort and baggage animals to come up.

The road over the ridge is very bad, being composed of very sharp volcanic rock, and on the crest of the ridge is an extinct volcano from which, countless ages ago, large streams of lava have come; the largest stream of lava is over three hundred yards in width and most difficult to ride across, the surface being hard and slippery. The crater seemed to have had an all round discharge, and what struck me most there was absolutely no cone of any sort nearer than Muscollo which must have been at least ten miles off in a westerly direction.

Where we camped at Ruvarea was about fifteen miles from the Welleh village, and here again we have a difficulty in names as the district is so thickly populated, and from my tent twenty-one hamlets are in sight within a very limited area, then besides the different hills and brooks all have a name, and it is impossible to make a map of the country except on a very large scale. It is much better to go by the names of the districts, and not by villages; but the names of churches are always worth putting down, and making land-marks of as they are so few and far between. It is as

well to know, if one is friendly with the priests, one can obtain anything in this country. I have found the name of the old Itchage Theophilus, who died at Axum this year, a perfect pass-word with the priests, and Welda Mariam who was confessor for some time to King Johannes, Ras Areya Selassie, and of Ras Mangesha is also well known to nearly all the clergy in the north.

I look in my diary and find "day ended with more fights with the villagers and escort," and at Ruvarea I also found some trouble at first, but it was through the fault of my friend the petty officer, who at my request visited the nearest group of houses to buy some milk and eggs or anything that there was for sale. He returned and told me he could get nothing. I then went with Hadgi Ali to try my luck, and I also was looked cross at. I asked for an explanation and produced a dollar, and then everything went on all right. I was told that the soldier had said that he wanted so many things for me without payment and if they were not given that the Waag-Choum would beat them and imprison them. I had the soldier up and did police magistrate, and there was an amusing scene; at last the soldier got cornered, and declared these Waag people were the biggest liars in Abyssinia, and if I liked to believe them instead of him, well he did not think much of me. I took the money I had given him away, and did my own deal, and found no difficulty in obtaining what I wanted.

This soldier amused me very much; the next morning he brought three women who had food for sale, and after Schimper had purchased it, the women went away down the side of the hill, and I soon heard them scream; on going down to see what was the matter I found he had taken away the bar of salt and the pocket handkerchief that they had received for their things they had brought, and they were in tears. I made him give the stolen things back, and asked for an explanation. All I got was, "what a fool I was for not taking things when I could; that the women were accustomed to have things stolen from them, and how could a poor soldier live if he did not plunder?" After this my soldier reformed, and was useful in procuring provisions, and never offered to take money, or salts, or the cloth given to the women, but he used to make up for it in other ways, which, however, did not interfere with my getting food brought to camp.

As Hailou could get no food from the head man they

both set out in the morning to have the quarrel settled by the nearest big chief, and I was told that we should not leave till the next day. Our daily rations for our escort and the wounded who joined us yesterday and are to travel with us to Yejju are, two sheep, five hundred breads, ten jars of beer, two pots of honey and ten pots of red pepper chutney, and extras for me in the shape of chickens, eggs, milk, and other small things that I may require. This is an unfair extra tax on the population, as half a dozen parties may be going along the same road daily and have to be provided for; there is a party of wounded just a few hours ahead of me, and another a few hours behind, and they will all have to receive rations, and at the same time the villagers are being plundered by the soldiers.

The day we spent in washing all our clothes with the shipti seed, and Schimper went out shooting, but did not succeed in getting anything but francolin, which are here very numerous, and we also saw from our tent, just before sunset, some oribis antelopes and a duiker. News arrived this evening that Fituari Avete, who lives about four hours march to the East, had rebelled against the Waag Choum on account of not being allowed to levy road dues on the market people, and had blocked the roads. We now muster some seventy people all told, and about fifty rifles, so that I do not think we shall be harmed as we are too strong a party and these mal-contents do not like fighting and only rob those who do not dare to retaliate. Our party have been joined by some wounded and the wife of Ras Mangesha's instructor of artillery, on her way back to Shoa. She is a nice middle-aged woman and comes from the Semien province where Queen Taitou comes from, and she has also a food order for herself and three servants, and cannot get her supplies without a great deal of trouble. There is also the keeper of King Menelek's powder magazine, who had his leg shattered by a shell at the battle of Adowa and a bullet wound through the shoulder. The right leg was amputated above the knee and has healed, but the bullet wound in the shoulder still suppurates and there is evidently something in the wound to come away; either bone or a bit of cloth. Another of the wounded is a merry boy of about sixteen who had his left leg broken in two places above the ankle; the lower part of the leg has been taken off below the knee. The man was operated on by the natives, the boy by an Italian doctor, and curiously the graver operation of the two in the man has

healed the quicker. I was greatly amused at the boy, his mule started along the road and he went hopping after it; caught it up and got into the saddle leap-frog fashion over the tail, a feat which a great many people with two legs could not do.

It was warm and fine last night, and the last three days have not been a bit warmer than ordinary summer weather in England, and I have not worn my helmet for a week. Our road was due south for about four miles, when it divided into two, one branch going south-east to Dildi, and the other south-west to Beghemeder. We took the south-west road, so as to keep clear of the Fituari Avete's people, which we followed for about four miles and then turned into a path that led due south, our Ruvarea guide knowing the road thoroughly; here we got into thick bush with many big fig trees and others which I did not know the name of, and no signs of cultivation or houses. I was told that in the rainy season plenty of large game come up from the Tacazze, but return as soon as the heavy rains are over.

On entering the bush we heard shouting and people calling to each other from the tops of the hills, which were supposed to be Avete's men. Hailou was in great form making the caravan keep together and throwing out flanking scouts, and an advance guard which I insisted on going with, telling him that no one would hurt me, that it was he they were after. We met no one until we came to the banks of one of the many tributaries of the upper Tserrare. This belt of bush is about six miles across, and widens the further it gets west. I am also told that it stretches down to the Tacazze, and that the dividing ridge between the two drainages is also covered with forest. At the first open ground we met about a hundred of Ras Wolie's soldiers with many transport mules on their way to Axum and Adowa to bring away the wounded that had been left behind, and also the arms that the Ras had left behind in store at Adowa, he having received a large share of the spoils of war and had no means at the time of taking it back with him. I remained at the banks of one of the streams for some time, talking to a party of priests who were on their way to Jerusalem, and they informed us that the Dildi road was not safe, as there was another rebel that had closed the Dildi-Aschangi roads and he mustered over three hundred rifles, so they had to make a detour and come round this way.

I saw here the first gipsy encampment in Abyssinia,

curious people with a red brown complexion, long straight black hair with regular gipsy features. The Abyssinians dislike them and believe they are capable of doing all sorts of mischief by magic and other means. They had with them a lot of waterproof grass baskets and wooden bowls and platters, which they manufacture and sell at the markets . . . they live by catching animals and they have the reputation of being great thieves, helping themselves at night time to the growing crops ; in habits therefore they resemble the English gipsies. There are only a few bands of them left in the country, and I regret that Hailou would not allow me to enter into conversation with them ; he pulled out his crucifix from the inside of his shirt and held it between himself and them until he got out of their sight.

We arrived at Koā district at our camping place after having done about twenty-one miles journey, the last four miles before arriving at Koā, over a bad bit of volcanic road with several lava streams. We crossed seven good-sized brooks, all running a little north of east, draining towards the Tserrare; two of them had a decided taste of sulphur, and were most nasty, these streams were all before the rise to Koā is reached. The first buildings on entering the district from the north, are those belonging to the priests, and on a small isolated eminence to the east of the road is Koā-Abo Church, which is supposed to be very ancient. It is in a good state of preservation, on its top is a very well made iron cross, nicely ornamented and seven of the points finished up with the usual ostrich egg. The churchyard is full of large trees and surrounded by a wall and a Tirncalli euphorbia hedge, and from the open green space outside the walls of the church a good view is obtained of the mountain range from Amba-Alagi to the mountains round Wandie ; the high peak of Aboona Joseph, and the still higher range of the whole northern slopes of the southern Lasta mountains.

Koā is very fertile, but here again the rinderpest killed off the whole of the cattle, and the chief of the village, who I had a long conversation with, told me he had lost fifty-six out of his fifty-seven ploughing oxen, and all his cows in less than ten days, with the exception of two or three heifers and some calves. He had a fine big house and formerly was a well-to-do man, but now he was reduced to penury, and he and the whole of his family had to do their cultivation with the hoe, so as to grow enough to keep themselves from starvation. We could get no milk in this village, and

very few supplies, so we made an early start the next morning as our destination was uncertain, and we did not know whether we should be able to get to Dildi, that was only twenty miles off. We had during the night one of the worst thunder and rain storms that I ever remember in any country, during which inches of rain must have fallen; it was soon over, and then the rest of the night and early morning was beautifully bright and clear. While it lasted I had to give refuge to some of the wounded in my tent, and though of course inconvenient I had not the heart to refuse them shelter.

The next morning we followed the direct Dildi road for about five hours and arrived at the cross roads in the Walakā district; at this place there is a rather celebrated church and monastery inhabited by many monks and nuns. The church, which is called by rather the long name of Abo Gabru Mumfaz Kudos, is very ancient, and is situated in a thick grove of enormous fig trees of the sycamore species, and is one of the most peaceful and quiet spots imaginable, and a perfect haven of rest for large numbers of birds of all sorts, including many of the lovely paradise fly-catchers with their long white tails. Here we remained to find out the news, and what our prospects were of getting on to Dildi.

The priests told us it was unsafe, and confirmed that the road to Dildi was held by a chief who had rebelled, and he had at least three hundred men with him; this was a different man to Avete, who I mentioned before, and his grievances were the same, as he had had his market dues abolished, and had been put under the Yejju government instead of that at Socota, and he objected to the change, and was stopping anyone who wanted to proceed to Yejju. What with this man and Avete and the Azebu Gallas on the warpath, this part of the country is in a disturbed state. Schimper tells me there is nothing to be alarmed about, as he knows the man, and he is a very good fellow, and would not dream of hurting a European. I believe this to be a fact, and my experience of Abyssinia is that as long as one does not side with one party or another, that the place is not dangerous, but only slightly inconvenient to a peaceable traveller like myself. I should think however, that for an irascible and bad tempered man, there is no place in the world where he could more easily come to grief, as the Abyssinians are very trying people to get on with, and are only too pleased

when they can make anyone lose their tempers; and I know of several travellers who have come to grief in the country, the late General Gordon and his secretary being among the number.

As it was impossible to go forward by the Dildi road, we changed our course from south-east to south-west, and soon struck the upper stream of the Tserrare river, up which we marched for about a couple of miles; the river here runs a little to the east of north-east, and then makes a bend to the north-west. It was fairly full of water, but was rapidly diminishing in height, and was full of trees, some of large size that had been uprooted by the night's storm. The rise and fall of the river here must be most rapid, owing to its large and precipitous drainage, and during the rainy season it is impassable for days together. We then had to go up the side of a cultivated terraced ridge, which I estimated to be, here at least, a thousand feet above the open valley in which we had been travelling, and for some distance before we had seen a curious and very brown triangular mark on the face of the ridge on which there was no cultivation; on getting closer we found it to be an immense landslip, started by the last night's rain. The mass of earth detached from the top was about twenty yards across, and was over three hundred yards in width at the lower part. The slip had increased in breadth the lower it went, and had carried away all the terraces it had met with in its descent, and thousands upon thousands of tons of earth had been displaced. The climb up this ridge was very slow and trying, owing to the muddy soil, and we were not sorry to get to the top and find ourselves on open downs.

CHAPTER XV

LASTA PROVINCE

WE had met no one during the morning's march, and on the top we came across a number of countrymen with their flocks and produce bound for Socota market; they eagerly demanded of us if the road was safe, as they had also heard of the revolt of the official near Dildi. We told them that Avete was also supposed to be closing the road, the other side of Koā, but they said they did not mind him as he was a friend of theirs, and they went on; we must have passed many hundreds of people after this, before we finished our day's march, all with cattle and produce for Socota; they altogether must have had several thousand sheep and goats for sale, showing what a traffic there must be at this market when all the roads are taken into consideration, we saw only what were going along one of many. The majority of the people went on, but some who did not know Avete, returned, and from one of them I purchased five good fat sheep of the small breed for a dollar. This would give us something to eat for a day or two, and make us independent of supplies from the peasantry, as our order for food was for the Dildi road and not for the one by which we were travelling. The order for my personal supplies was in general terms and good for any place in the Waag choum Ganguls' governorate.

On reaching the top of the downs we stopped for a rest after the climb from the low country, and to take our mid-day repast, which on this occasion was native bread, hard boiled eggs and onions, such strong ones that they brought the tears to my eyes. There was a bitter cold wind blowing, making sitting in the sun behind the lee of a big juniper tree most pleasant; the scenery and vegetation had entirely changed, and we were surrounded by junipers, ericas and other moorland plants, and the rocks were all lichen and moss-covered, and long festoons of orchella or "old man's beard" moss hanging from the branches of the trees—Hare-bells, bilberries, giant thistles, nearly worthy to be called

trees, showed that we had come into higher regions than we had hitherto travelled over, and the short moor grass intermingled with stag's horn moss I had never seen before in Abyssinia. The scenery was lovely, and the panorama of the mountains round Socota with the Muscollo group very fine. No cultivation on the moorlands except barley, which will only grow in the more sheltered depressions, and where the undulating heights are broken by canyons. A three hours' march across this open country led to a pass with higher land on the eastern side, and on the west deep precipices, a fall to more open grass land which gradually falls away in cultivated slopes to the direct road from Socota to Lalibela.

This place is called the Lazema pass, and after following it for about half an hour we turned off sharp to the east, through a sort of rift in the hills, and reached the Teracha valley which is of an irregular star-shaped form, the fifth point tending towards the east, and giving a confined view of the lower mountains round Dildi, which from our great altitude we look down on. The Teracha district is fairly well populated, but nothing like the one we have been passing through from Socota, and we are now in the Lasta province which began after we had climbed the ridge on to the moorlands. At Teracha the ericas grow to a great size, some of them being fully sixty feet in height, and they make most ornamental trees, and look as if they had been clipped and pruned by some giant gardener. They were not in full blossom, the lower parts only coming into bloom, and the bees were busy gathering honey. In England bees are sent to the moors to make plenty of honey of a good quality, and here the natives are also well aware that their moors are the best place to obtain honey from, and not only do they keep a lot of hives in their houses, but they put them in sheltered places in the canyons out of the reach of the ratels, and they gather and sell large quantities every year. I got a jar of perfectly white honey here that was delicious, and we spent the evening in clarifying and bottling it, as our sugar was nearly expended, a few ounces of tea unhappily only remained, and our candles were only sufficient to last for a few days longer.

I made a visit after we had pitched our camp to a very pretty neighbouring village to see the people and to try and get some supplies. The women and children ran away into their houses when I got near them, as they had never seen

a white man before, as this district is far away from the ordinary high roads in Abyssinia. In a short time they ventured out and I was soon an object of curiosity, and was surrounded by some thirty of them. They were very dirty and I should think that they never washed except in the hottest of weather; I certainly could excuse them, as I found it bitterly cold. I managed to get from them some milk and chickens with the usual eggs, and a rice sack full of potatoes, for which I paid one piece of salt and two coloured cotton pocket handkerchiefs. All the women had a turn at fastening them round their heads, and next morning I could have purchased the whole of the things they had to spare for these handkerchiefs, they were so greatly admired.

I never remember feeling so cold as I did that night, and I only took my boots off and had to put another flannel shirt on, an extra tweed coat, an ulster and two blankets and a rug, and then I was not warm enough and my teeth chattered with the cold. My Somalis and the Tigréan Abyssinians were miserable and made a fire big enough to roast an ox with, over which they sat. On looking out of my tent in the morning just as it was getting daylight everything was white with hoar frost and a thin coating of ice on a puddle; the weather was misty and very chilly, and there was not a movement among the Abyssinians who lay huddled up together with their feet nearly in the embers of the large fire. It soon came on to sleet and everyone was miserable, at about nine o'clock the sun broke through the clouds and put some warmth into us, and the tent soon thawed from its board-like state and dried.

One of my transport mules, that looked quite well when I started from Koa the morning before, had during the afternoon developed symptoms of the prevalent horse sickness and had been left behind at a house about five miles back. I sent off Hadgi Ali at daylight to see how it was, and he returned with its hoof and part of its fetlock; it had died before sunset and had been nearly entirely eaten by hyenas and other animals during one night. This mule to look at was the strongest of all and in the best condition, and in a few hours it was dead; here was another instance of the vagaries of this disease, picking out the best and strongest animal and leaving those in poorer condition. There seems to be no remedy for it, and not more than five per cent. of those attacked ever recover.

Round Teracha I came across the first specimens of the Kousso tree. It grows something like a horse-chestnut and has a large gnarled and uneven trunk of a good length. The wood from this tree makes good timber for building purposes, and is of an Indian red colour with a hard close grain. The trusses of flowers are at first of a light blue mauve colour, and then change to a bright pink mauve, when they are picked and dried and are sent to all parts of Abyssinia, and are used as a medicine for the tœnia or tape-worm, a very common complaint amongst the inhabitants, and mostly brought on by eating raw meat and tripe, which is consumed in large quantities and is never washed. This tree is a very ornamental one and no doubt could be easily grown in all the southern counties of England, as it grows here at the highest altitudes where snow, sleet and frost are common. The giant erica should also do out of doors on our west coast that has the benefit of the Gulf stream, but I have never heard that attempts have been made to bring over either of these specimens.

Above Teracha on the very highest ridges and peaks grows a wonderful Lobelia, which is perhaps the strangest and most unique plant in the whole country. Its scientific name is Rhynchopetalum montana, and only one specimen alive has been seen at Kew, which died many years ago. I was fortunate enough to procure some of its seed that I gave to the Royal Gardens at Kew, and also to some of my friends, and I hope soon that it will be acclimatised in England, and that the public will be able to admire it when planted out in the different parks and public gardens. In shape this plant is more like the common yucca but its stem is much longer and broader, a large specimen will just before the plant flowers be perhaps as high as from seven to eight feet, and perfectly bare of leaves and the stem of a dark brown looks more like a small crocodile's skin; then will come a bunch of sharp pointed yucca shaped drooping leaves, making a bush of another six feet in height from which will spring a straight shaft of flower perhaps eight feet in height; the shaft will be clothed with a mass of small flowers of an eau-de-Nil colour.

The effect of a group or mass of these plants is very fine with their dark, shiny foliage, and as isolated specimens on a lawn, or planted with the guna-guna, to which they would offer a great contrast, would be an ornamental addition to any garden. The Abyssinian name for this plant is the

gevara, and, as it has a hollow stem, the small boys break it down and use it as a trumpet. A great noise can be made with it, and it can be heard for several miles in the mountainous country.

We got away about ten o'clock for an unknown destination, and, as not one of our party knows the country, we had to engage a guide; and we had a great difficulty in procuring one, as they of course think it an unfriendly action to take a big party like we are now composed of to a village at which they have friends, with the chance of the soldiers pillaging them. Hailou was very down on his luck last night, and as I knew he had no meat for himself and soldiers I made them a present of a couple of sheep. He ought to feed me, but now it is the other way.

The Choum of the district, who had been absent, overtook us and told the guide to take us to Artemata, which was only about twelve miles off, and the march I shall remember as long as I live, owing to the lovely scenery, the glorious lights and shades and the peculiar effect of the sun on the cloud-banks, which often reflected our shadows as they were so dense and so close, and for the many samples of climate met with, frost and sleet, rain and hail, sunshine and cloud, with two thunderstorms; at one moment everything bright and clear and at another everything obscured and so misty that it was impossible to see more than three or four yards ahead. Our view to the south-west and south-east was entirely shut out by the high downs that commenced from the road along which we were travelling. Our main course yesterday was south 10° east and to-day south 20° east for about ten miles, when we made about south-east to our camping-place. The view of the Teracha valley was very fine, and two glimpses of the northern country were only visible through two breaks in the mountains. The one to the north-north-west took in part of our old friend, the Muscollo group, and the other to the north-north-east, the mountains round Amba Alagi.

The point of the star-shaped valley up which we travelled soon turned into a deep canyon, and just as we were turning a sharp point in the road, that was very narrow, with a deep precipice on one side, the mist rolled down the mountains and completely shut out our view, and we had to stop owing to the dense fog and the narrowness of our path which made walking dangerous. A puff of wind came from the south, and in a few minutes it cleared, and the view was a lovely one, looking up the canyon with its enormous lining of rocks

and boulders. At the head of the gorge was a magnificent stream of water broken into numerous casçades. It then flowed rather tranquilly for about a hundred yards over fairly level ground, when it plunged down as a splendid waterfall into the deep abyss. On the opposite side three other fair-sized waterfalls were coming down the broken sides of the mountains, one of them making a clear plunge of several hundreds of feet, while the side we were on another small feathery fall fell from ridge to ridge, and crossed our path as a small stream some thirty yards broad by about eighteen inches deep, and then made nearly a sheer drop into the depths below. The mountain side was covered with big ericas, gevaras, giant thistles, gorse and tufts of fern, and the grass and moorland was dotted all over with wild flowers, many being old English friends and others entirely new to me. Schimper was delighted, as he has inherited his father's taste for flowers, and neither he nor his father had ever visited this district. We caught a glimpse of the black guereza monkeys, and the cooing noise that they make, something like a pigeon, could be plainly heard. Here and there a klipspringer antelope bounded across the path and then sprung from boulder to boulder up the mountain side, till at last it remained stationary on some pointed rock, its fore and hind feet nearly touching and its four hoofs perhaps not occupying a circle of more than three inches in diameter, its shape looking most curious against the background of blue sky.

A big francolin was common but very wild. I do not remember seeing this species before, and many hares and the large dark brown sand-grouse nearly the same colour as the English bird were very plentiful. I should have liked to have remained a week at this spot, as the scenery was charming and no doubt many new and lovely hardy flowers could be collected, and the country seemed to be full of small game, but I had to go on with my march, as I was not my own master.

We slipped more than walked down to the bottom of the canyon, and got drenched by the spray and mist from the waterfalls, and as one could not have been much wetter, we walked through the stream at the ford, the water being bitterly cold, and commenced the terrible climb up the other side, and it took us fully an hour to get to the top: at this place it took us considerably over an hour and a half to make about a thousand yards of easting, and there are many places in northern Abyssinia where this takes place.

The view from the Artemata side of the gorge towards Terracha is on a grander scale, and the upper waters of the Tserrare can be traced through a rift in the mountains for many miles on their way north. This gorge marks the boundary between the Waag Choum's governorate and that of Ras Woly the Governor of Yejju.

We were not sorry to get into camp and get a change, as I was wet through, and alternately shivering and perspiring with a very bad attack of fever brought on by my ducking. I had a miserable night as the tent got blown down during a storm of wind by the pegs drawing, and with the fever alternately throwing off my cover during the hot attacks, and again piling everything I could on me, when the cold fits came on. I took considerably over sixty grains of quinine, and managed towards morning to get a little sleep, and woke without any fever, but with my head buzzing from the effects of the quinine.

A cold, raw, cheerless morning with thin ice everywhere, as from this altitude we look down upon Abouna-Joseph mountain supposed to be over ten thousand feet, which is to the north-east. About seven o'clock, it commenced to snow and lasted for about an hour, when it turned into a cold rain which speedily changed the white landscape again into green. The mules look tucked up, and I was fortunate enough to get a lot of barley for them, that the poor brutes devoured ravenously, as they have been lately on short grain rations. We had a long march of about twenty miles to do from Artemata to get off the down land, and started with everything more or less wet through, luckily as soon as we started it began to clear up, and it soon turned out a glorious day, with bright sunshine and a nearly cloudless sky, and we had in some parts a splendid view towards Dildi, and also to the north, and the Wadela and Dalanta plateaux in the neighbourhood of Magdala to the south and south-east.

Soon after leaving the village we came to the road that runs to Lalibela, and some of the churches of this town were visible. It was about ten miles distant and much below us. The downs were nearly treeless, and the only plant of any size was the gevara, long lines of them standing up on the ridges against the sky-line. Here a very conspicuous feature in the scenery were the long walls of quartz, that ran in irregular lines across the open down-land, the gradual wash of rain of countless centuries had removed the softer soil and left the hard rock standing, and many of these walls were

twenty to thirty feet in height; in parts where the veins were thin, they had fallen from the gradual erosion, and lay in confused heaps; while in other places where the veins were thicker, they stood as a giant rampart, and offered an unsurmountable obstacle to the traveller. Against many of these walls the shepherds had built their cattle sheds, where they housed their animals at night, and where they generally sought shelter before sunset from the bitter cold winds that sweep these high uplands. Here again the cattle disease had not worked the same ravages as in the lower countries and large herds of horned beasts, besides flocks of sheep were scattered over the downs and looked fat and healthy. Large droves of brood mares and their foals, pure bred and cross were very numerous, the foals galloping madly about, now charging in a compact mass, then changing the order and following each other in a long string, then halting and wheeling, and then closing together again and coming full gallop quite close to us to have a look at the strangers, and then returning as hard as they could go to their dams, bucking, squealing and kicking at each other and enjoying their liberty and short childhood.

The peasants of this part of the country escaped the exactions of King Menelek's troops on their march north and south, and gathered in force on the only paths that lead from the highlands to the low country. These paths are very abrupt, and there is not more than enough room for two or at most three people abreast on them, so they are easily defended by resolute men armed with modern breech-loaders, and those that crown the heights have those that are ascending at their mercy. Where we left the highland, the descent was down a zig-zag path with very awkward places, and my riding mule has a trick of going to the edge of the path and doing a sort of Blondin business on the extreme edge which I dislike immensely, as on looking sideways from the saddle there is nothing but space, and a tumble would mean instant death. I believe the little brute knows I dislike it, and does it on purpose; coming down, a bit of the path gave way with one of her hind feet, and a small avalanche of small stones were started, so I got off and walked, and let her go down of her own accord; but she still kept to the edge, instead of walking in the middle of the path as any other animal would do. I never get giddy, and can climb up any mountain, but I prefer going on the level, and the days are passed that I delighted in getting to the top of every peak that I came across.

The road led down from the south of the Lasta plateau to Wandie, and the road made by the English to the Tacazze river, could easily be seen for miles. At last we struck it and followed it for about a mile, and then made off to a series of hamlets to the east of the valley, down which the river Dangelsa runs to join the Tacazze. At the first village of Wandatch the escort began entering the houses and seeing what they could steal; the men of the hamlet were all away in the fields, and the women were unprotected. I was very amused at seeing three of the men that entered one of the houses rush out very quickly with swarms of bees encircling their heads, and then two women and a girl rush out and go into a neighbouring house and shut the door. Two of them were very fair, nearly white, and as soon as I got safe away from the bees I made inquiries about them and what had taken place, and I found that the women had deliberately upset the bee hives inside the house that were attached to the walls so as to drive the soldiers away and a very effective mode it was, as the bees knowing the occupants of the house, had gone for the strangers. One of the soldiers had both eyes closed from the stings, and his head was greatly swollen, another had one eye closed and the third was also badly stung. They threatened all sorts of things against the women, but they did not dare go near the village again.

The nearly white woman and her daughter, who was nearly as fair, owed their colour to some little accident during the 1868 expedition. There had been a camp at Wandatch, and it was also a Commissariat station, where quantities of stores were purchased, and the fair woman was one of the results of the march to Magdala; she was very nice looking, and went by the name of the "Inglese;" her daughter was a pretty pert little thing about ten years old, but not nearly as fair as her mother, who would have passed as an English woman.

The road built by the English is still in a good state of repair, and considering nothing had been done to it for twenty-eight years, it must have been originally a very good piece of work. The road from Wandatch to the Tacazze river is so well mapped and described, that it wants no further remarks from me. We took the lower road in the valley, leading past Wandatch Mariam church as it was, although not so good, a trifle shorter than the one made by the English. The climate had entirely changed from yester-

day. On the Lasta highlands it might be termed early spring, and patches of wheat and barley the only grains grown ; here along the banks of the Dangelsa river, it was what might be called early summer, with all sorts of Abyssinian crops being cultivated. The Dangelsa is more like a highland trout stream, a succession of pools and broken water and shallows, about two feet deep. We crossed the stream where some irrigation channels branched off to cultivate the lower flats and took a south-easterly road to the Tacazze river, here about fifty yards broad, to a ford and then camped at the village of Kuvena. This is a pretty spot, and a good view of the Tacazze valley is obtainable, which runs due east and west. Towards the west, by using the glasses, the town of Lalibela with its numerous churches is distinctly seen, and to the east the high crater-shaped end of the valley shuts out a further view.

Just before crossing the Tacazze one of the soldiers forming the escort commenced stealing the peas and beans belonging to the peasants, and on a small boy trying to prevent him the soldier beat him, another boy then ran up and hit the soldier over the head with a quarter staff and felled him to the ground. There was only the petty officer near and he rode back to complain to Dedjatch Ali, the governor of the district, where Hailou and the rest of the escort were having a feast. I put the wounded soldier on a mule and went on after my luggage where all my bandages were kept, telling the two boys to run away and hide as they might get into trouble, so accordingly they went away due west in an opposite direction as hard as they could. I admired their pluck and I had no sympathy for the soldier whatever.

It was dusk when Hailou came back and too late for him to go back to get the villagers punished, and he had also missed the petty officer who did not turn up till the next morning, and he was then very drunk. The first thing that Hailou knew of the affair was seeing his wounded soldier whose head I had bandaged up with a pad of lint and a dressing of carbolic. The wound was down to the bone and about three inches long and would have killed any ordinary European, but the Abyssinians' skulls are about as hard as the rocks of which their country is composed. This wound made the other soldiers more chary of stealing, and what with the bees and the boy that broke the soldier's head, our people had certainly got the worst of it in this district. The man who was the most badly stung looked an awful sight,

lips, nose, eyes and ears all swollen up, and on looking at himself in my looking-glass he promptly dropped it with fright and said all sorts of things against the women ; the girls at Kuvena also chaffed him and asked him if he liked Wandatch honey. Ever after on the trip one could always get a rise out of him by asking when he had had any honey last ; a bee had a sore point for him.

Next morning we made an early start from Kuvena and it was bitter cold, my fingers and toes ached and I did the first three hours on foot and found walking at a sharp pace the only way to keep warm. From a clear steel-grey morning with heavy white clouds hanging on the peaks it became, as soon as the sun got high enough, a beautifully warm bright day, but still when one was not moving the lee of a big rock in the sun was pleasant as the stiff breeze blowing was very cold.

We halted for lunch just *vis-a-vis* to the first sources of the Tacazze. They are situated on a small level field about fifty feet above the bottom of the valley, and there may be about twenty of them altogether, many of them shaded by an evergreen bush which was quite new to me and seemed to be of the privet order. Just before reaching the sources on a hill on the north side of the valley is the Church of Chevenan Gorgis in a splendid grove of juniper trees; immediately above the sources on the hill is another church also surrounded by juniper trees dedicated to Debbessa Jesu; tradition has it that when Menelek, the son of the Queen of Sheba by King Solomon, came from Jerusalem with the ark, it was placed on the ground at this spot where he camped, and these springs gushed forth and he immediately ordered a temple to be built on the spot.

On leaving this camp Menelek commenced his march towards the east, and on the bearers of the ark putting it down, after about an hour's march, they found that they could not move it as it firmly adhered to the ground. This spot is supposed by some of the Abyssinians to be the true resting-place of the ark that was brought from Jerusalem; there is a church built over the spot called Eyela Kudus Michael. It is situated opposite to the village of Eyela which takes up the western slopes of a very pretty small valley running north from the main Tacazze valley, the church being on the western slope of the valley. It is nearly impossible for a stranger to obtain admittance to this church, and the place in the Holy of Holies where the ark

is supposed to rest is shown to no one. This ark cannot be in two places ; the people of the north declare it is in the sacred grove of Axum in the church of Selata Musser (Place of Moses), and the priests of the Eyela district declare it is in their church, so they always quarrel and wrangle over this vexed question, the same as European priests do over their sacred relics.

Eyela church is splendidly situated and the whole district is one of the most picturesque spots in Abyssinia, being well wooded and full of the most enormous Kousso trees, and the flowers from these trees are supposed to be more efficacious for the cure of the tapeworm than from any other district. These trees were in full bloom and looked very handsome with their Indian red-gnarled stems, bright green leaves and pinkish and bluish mauve masses of flowers. Everything seems to grow in this favoured and sheltered spot. The church is of the circular kind and neither better nor worse than the ordinary run of Abyssinan buildings.

After leaving Eyela we continued our march due east up the valley, the lower level being nearly knee-deep with splendid grass and large herds of cattle, droves of horses and flocks of sheep dotted about over the landscape ; the sides of the hills were covered with barley, the wind making movements in the thick crops like ripples on an emerald sea, and above all the curious gevaras standing like sentinels on the sky line. The grass land ended in a quaking bog, and after this was passed, not, however, without a little trouble, the rise out of the partly crater-shaped valley commenced up one of the worst bits of road that I ever experienced, the ground being composed of boulders divided by bog into which the mules sank up to their fetlocks ; springs of water were everywhere, and the snipe in wisps and singly were rising all round us, and splendid sport might have been had. A tiresome climb ended in harder ground and then the rock was reached, and a few hundred yards further the dividing ridge between the Tacazze and the waters going west from those to the east.

Nothing could have been more lovely than the view, and the weather, for a wonder, had been behaving itself. Bright sunshine with an occasional passing fleecy white cloud that threw shadows on the vast landscape before us. To the north the highlands of the Tacazze sources, then a little further west the tiers of Lasta downs, over which we crossed due west the far-off mountains of Begemeder. To the south the open plateaux of Wadela rising towards the south-west to the environs of Magdala, making up a lovely view of a

charming country, and, despite its cold wind-swept upper downs, more like our English border counties than any other scenery I can liken it to only here on a huger scale than that of England. Turning to the east and walking for about fifty yards, one comes to the top of a huge precipice, and what a different picture meets the eye. A sheer drop of many hundred feet and then terrace upon terrace of barley and wheat till the lower part of the valley is reached, where crops of a warmer country are cultivated, the northern and north-eastern part being covered in by open down land, here the main southern road runs in and follows for about a couple of miles the middle of the valley of which the ridge we are standing on forms one side.

Due east a break in the mountains reveals a glimpse of the simmering hot Danakil low country, and then the mountains again rise to a higher elevation and form the opposite side of the valley that forms upper Yejju. Two silvery waterfalls drop down the ridge from the highland, and one of the streams that makes the nearest one divides in two, part of the water going down the boggy slope up which we struggled towards the Tacazze, the other towards the Danakil country, at last to be swallowed up in that thirsty land. I sat on this ridge for over two hours watching with intense interest the lovely scenery to be seen on either side, certainly the sources of the Tacazze are most lovely and make up a bit of territory any country might be proud of. It has always been, it is said, held by the Christians, Mahomed Grayn not being able to conquer it and the wild Gallas, from further south, never came further than their stronghold of Magdala, and always left Eyela and its churches, and the other priestly city of Lalibela further down the valley in peace.

Here may be said to end the pure Christian part of Abyssinia, as the inhabitants of the country further south are a mixture of the two creeds, Moslem and Christian, the latter all being Amharans, who I consider a much inferior breed than those that inhabit Tigré and the north. The men not being as fine, nor the women so handsome and neither sex capable of so much development. The southern Gallas have been conquered by the Western Amharans, and they have now been for many years a conquered race, whereas during the time of the Moslem wave of conquest they mastered not only the south but large portions of the north, but they never could quite bring the Christian mountaineers under their rule.

CHAPTER XVI

YEJJU AND RAS WOLY

THE descent from the highlands to the eastern main road to the south was part of the way a terrible scramble, and after leaving the rocky granite walls, deep holding layers of black and red soil were reached; we followed the road for about three miles, always descending when we struck the upper canyon which branches out into the Yejju valley of Sanca. The Italian map here is far from correct, as there is no other road except a mountain path some four miles further east, which is never used except by foot people.

The road runs due north and south to within about a point. Every mile, the more we descended, the weather became warmer, and there is a most marked change in the vegetation and surroundings. At the top of the canyon, the road runs through a splendid erica forest, these trees give place to juniper, shumac and others that flourish in a country with a trifle warmer climate till at last the trees consist of wanza, wild olive, different sycamore, figs and a very pretty tree called by the Abyssinians the Waiva, which grows to a large size and is very spreading and shady. It produces at the end of each branchlet a bunch of purple-coloured flowers which contain a flat seed about the size of a shilling, that is used by the priests to dye their garments a yellow colour, a lighter shade than gamboge, and the dresses of the Buddhist priests in Ceylon and those worn by the Abyssinian monks are nearly of the same tint.

The Waiva is found in the Hamasen and as near the sea-coast as Ghiuda, but never at a very high or very low elevation averaging from 3,000 to 5,000 feet altitude. We again got into the country of the giant mimosa trees and the vegetation at last got nearly tropical, large groves of bananas surrounding many of the houses. The wild flowers were a gorgeous sight and of many varied and beautiful descriptions, the wild, climbing, pink pea covering the forest trees to the very topmost branches, and hanging down in festoons of

bloom. Orchids of many sorts new to me, staghorn ferns grasping the trunks of the trees and the wild asparagus with its feathery fronds, on the banks on each side of the road, ferns of all sorts, maiden hair and Lygodiums being very common with clumps of Abutilons and white Daturas with their trumpet shaped flowers. Other common road-side plants, such as the Kalancoie with its various coloured flowers, such as pink, yellow, orange, scarlet, purple, and striped yellow and scarlet, and purple and white abounded and the ditches were full of the cyperus palm-shaped plant.

Aloes, cactus and euphorbiae of all sorts on the sides of the hills, with an undergrowth of the wild fennel so common in Tigré, and that looks so pretty with its graceful foliage covered with dewdrops in the early morning, and everywhere the wild rose, jessamine and different sorts of convolvulus. I was delighted with everything, and I do not think in such a short distance, I ever came across before such a varied and wonderful collection of plants that Kew could not equal in the gayest season of the year, and Ceylon at its best could not rival.

The canyon then opened out into a wide valley, and the scenery before me quite beggared description. Seven water-falls were to be seen from one point of the road, coming down in cascades and mighty falls from the surrounding highlands, and the valley lay stretched out in front a green gem surrounded by a setting of grey weather-worn granite. On an eminence in the centre of the Sanca valley was the church of Geshobar Abo, with its market-green below. A network of irrigation channels came from every waterfall the moment they got into lower ground, and dozens of groups of houses, with their sheltering trees and hedges, studded the sides of the hills and the slightly higher parts of the valley. I never enjoyed seeing a view more and I do not believe that this world can produce a more lovely and prosperous spot, nature having blessed this place with her choicest gifts.

We went about a mile further on than the market-place and camped just outside a small hamlet, on one of the greenest of lawns, surrounded by irrigation channels about six feet broad by about three feet deep, bank full of the most lovely clear water. I had been gradually taking off my clothes, and on coming down from the highlands had discarded my ulster overcoat, then my thick tweed shooting-jacket, and arrived in camp in my shirt sleeves. My Somali servants were delighted with the change, as the last few days

had been most trying and they suffered a great deal from the snow, sleet and hail, the two former they had never seen in their own country. The village produced everything that man wants in this world, tobacco of excellent quality, bananas, limes, oranges, cotton, coffee, sugar cane, potatoes, vegetables of all sorts, red peppers, onions, garlic, wheat, barley, indian corn, dhurra, tef and other grains, beans, peas, shipti, plant for soap, plenty of milk and butter, oxen, sheep, chickens and everything in abundance, and at absurdly cheap prices, also the most delicious white honey, for which the district is famed.

What more does a semi-savage require, tobacco to soothe him, honey to make an intoxicating liquor, less harmful than the European poison, and a supply of every sort of food to be had for the least amount of labour; and he can sit all day and smoke, drink and eat and make love to his numerous wives, as the people are nearly all Mahomedans and the rule regarding drinking, made by their prophet, is not rigorously enforced, as they say, Mahomed did not forbid the use of liquor but the abuse of it, and if they get a trifle too much sometimes giving alms and being charitable will wipe away the offence. The men do not seem to be cursed with the bad-tempered, cross-grained women that exist in other parts of the world, as the females of the country up to a certain age are charming, but like the flowers that surround them, are short lived and soon run to seed, and then spend their time in looking out after and labouring to procure the various wants of their lords and masters.

Woman's place in Yejju seems to be to please, and when she ceases to be a companion or to make herself agreeable, she is made to work and some one else takes her place in the affections of her husband. A mother of a family is looked up to, and what she says and does is privileged, but a woman with no children the moment she becomes to be a nuisance is got rid of, and I cannot but think that the men must be envied that they can so easily get rid of a female that has no good word to say for any one that has the misfortune to live under the same roof with her. I am not mentioning this in any disparagement to the general run of the opposite sex, as many of them, bless them, are as kind and nice as possible, but only to show what a peaceful nice country Yejju seems to be, with a splendid climate, splendid scenery, splendid vegetation and a bountiful supply of everything that man can want here below.

It has, however, peculiar customs that would certainly be a drawback for Europeans, and before the male sex can be thought to have arrived at man's estate they have to kill a fellow creature; before they have done so, they cannot have their hair plaited or wear any ornaments on their head of any sort, neither can they have any intercourse with women or enter into the married state. It is rather a drawback to the peace of the country, as when a young man wishes to marry he must bring a trophy to his young woman to show his gallantry. This is not difficult in the time of war, but when there are no disturbances in the country, raids have to be planned into the lower Danakil country with the object of killing men and looting cattle, and several young warriors will set out together, and if successful will return with what they require and many horned cattle and sheep and goats, and then festivities and marriages take place and the villages are the scenes of great rejoicing.

Failing these raids they will often plan the most cold blooded murders, the young woman will arrange with the object of her choice to start some day and get near to some village a little way from the district, and the young man will hide in the bushes while the young woman will start horrible cries of distress, to try and allure some man to aid her. The young syren may succeed, and some youth may think it is one of the women from his village that is in trouble, and will rush out to see what is the matter, and will get speared in the back for his trouble; the pair of murderers will then return with their trophy and set up housekeeping together.

One never sees in Yejju men going about singly on the roads or on a journey away from their district; they generally go either in pairs or in company with several others, and always well armed. Life is safe enough near home, and it is generally the Christians that fall victims in their attempts to rescue the weaker sex. Yejju maidens are pretty, graceful girls, but I do not think I would go to their aid no matter how long they cried; my Somali servants, being strict Mohamedans and saying their prayers the orthodox number of times each day, were horrified at the laxness of their co-religionists, and the whole time we were in this province they always remained close to camp, and our Christian escort also kept together.

The ruler of Yejju Ras Woly is doing everything he can to put down this horrible custom, and it is now not nearly so prevalent as it used to be before he took the

country in hand, but all old customs die hard, especially in Abyssinia, and no doubt this proof of manhood will still linger in the more remote parts of the district for some time longer; as the principal victims are Christians, who are the ruling race, and in a minority, these crimes have to be strictly punished. These Gallas that inhabit Yejju have customs much the same as the Black and White Esa Somalis, who both wear feathers in their hair after killing their man, and when they die their graves are decorated with one upstanding stone for every man that they have killed, some of the graves having over twenty "witnesses" as they are called. Here in Yejju the graves in the cemeteries are all marked with stones, and some of the graves are very tastefully arranged and well kept, whereas in the churchyard of Geshobar Abo the last resting-places of the dead can only be distinguished by the unevenness of the soil.

There can be no doubt that the Yejju people came up from the low country many years ago, as they are in type much the same as the Danakils and the Black and White Esa Somalis, who I look on as being a mixture between the Somalis and Danakils, the latter being most likely Semitic pastoral Bedouins pushed over from the opposite side of the sea in remote times, and the Yejju people are a cross between the agricultural original owners of the country and the pastoral people, as they seem to combine the agricultural and pastoral life, living by their flocks and by agriculture, in which irrigation plays an important part. They are a fine race of men, and the women are also handsome, and I should think that from the mode of life that they lead, are capable of taking a much higher position than what they now occupy; they are not bigoted Christians nor fanatical Mohamedans, and seem to take life easily.

The White Esa Somalis, who have only been under English influence for a very short time, have lost the majority of their bad customs, and are turning into peaceful traders, and I am informed that the Yejju people have also settled down greatly, and could they be put under a good and enlightened Government, they would make good subjects and splendid fighting material, in spite of their nasty habit of murdering people before they marry. At present they farm highly, keep their ground wonderfully clean, and seem thoroughly to understand the system of irrigation; what I saw of them I found them intelligent, good-tempered, and very hospitable, but entirely unac-

quainted with Europeans or European manufactures; they live in good stone houses well-thatched, and being a fairly warm country they are better ventilated; in habits they are clean, and do a good deal of washing and bathing, and I found my servants romping in the water with a lot of girls on several occasions.

Ras Woly told me Yejju was entirely self-supporting, and required nothing from any other country but firearms and cartridges. That they grew their own cotton, dyed it, and manufactured it; they tanned the hides and skins that they required; they smelted their own iron for making spears, swords, knives, and agricultural instruments; they made their own pottery, and that they had every grain and oil seed that was required, and they had never suffered from starvation, and they grew more food than they knew what to do with, and raised more cattle than required for local consumption, in fact it is without exception the most fertile and happy country in Abyssinia, and one of the most healthy, and any sort of climate can be got within a short distance.

In the market places camels are seen that come up from the low country and from the Italian port of Assab, and as it is an impossibility ever to make a commercial railway north or south throughout Abyssinia, owing to the engineering difficulties, Yejju and Central Abyssinia may some day be served by a light line of railway from the sea coast at Assab; the line run along one of the roads by which the camels now find their way to these markets.

That there is a future for Yejju there can be no doubt, as the coffee and the sugar cane are now found, and the country seems admirably adapted to the cultivation of tea, and every known cereal exists. The red pepper is the great feature of the country and very large quantities of it are grown, not only for local consumption but for export to the other parts of Abyssinia, a certain amount of rock salt in bars also comes up from the low country, but not nearly so much as to Macalle, this town doing the largest trade of all in this commodity.

After leaving our camp near Geshobar Abo church our march was down the valley for about three hours, and we then crossed a spur that runs at right angles to the road which divides the upper Yejju valley from the next which is called the Ata valley. Waldea the chief town of Yejju is about three miles off the road to the east, which we did not

go into, and pushed on to Mokareet, so as to make a short march into Merta next morning, where Ras Woly has his headquarters. What with the change of temperature and getting a slight chill from bathing, I had in the night a very bad bout of fever and had to take a large dose of quinine, and so did not enjoy the scenery and the lovely fertile country as I should have done.

Before getting to Mokareet we were joined by Ras Mangesha's young sister. She is supposed to be a nun and to devote her time to charity and good actions, and she has asked permission of Hailou to join us and camp with us for the next three or four days. I now quote from my diary.

"I believe this is a got up job, as Hailou had his hair replaited this morning, and put on clean clothes, and the pair are evidently very old friends. She is dressed in the most spotless white garments of the very best quality, and is most clean and neat in her appearance. From under her clean white hood a pretty face appears with a pair of roguish merry eyes, and I am afraid that she is a young woman to upset any canon or other high church dignitary, a sort of person that Nell Cook in the Ingoldsby Legends got rid of. She sent over her pretty waiting-maid as soon as camp was pitched asking me to come and pay her a visit, but I was too seedy with fever, so sent Schimper to make my excuses; when he came back his first remark in his precise manner of talking was: 'Oh Mr Wylde I do not think she is a very good lady, she has asked me for many things, and she wants your umbrella.' Of course I had to send it, and next morning on the way to Merta I had some of the sweetest of smiles, and we kept up a long conversation; she had never seen an Englishman before, and she wanted to know if they all had red heads and moustaches, and were big men. I told her I was very small, in fact so small that no one took any notice of me, and that many English men and women had hair quite as scarlet as the red pepper, of which there was a quantity drying beside the road; she thought she would like to go to England to see big men and marry someone with light coloured-hair as all the Abyssinians had black.

"I found out that she was considered very 'rapid' even for Abyssinia, where the young ladies are fast, and that her brother had sent her to a nunnery as he could not keep her in order, and she absolutely refused to marry the men of his choice; she was changing her quarters from one nunnery to another, and was evidently sweet on Hailou, who is very

good-looking, but rather effeminate, and he was furious at her taking any notice of me and Schimper.

"I was sorry the three days she journeyed with us that I had fever so badly, as I should have much liked to have found out more about what is done by the nuns, the only chances I have had have been from good pious old ladies at Abbi-Addi and Macalle, who fasted for over half the number of days in the year, and were perpetually praying and singing from the early grey dawn till late at night, and they seemed to lead a calm and peaceful life in their beautiful natural surroundings, and bothered themselves very little with the troubles of this life, and passed their days in eating, sleeping and praying, and doing what little acts of charity that they could in the way of tending the sick and feeding any poor beggars that came to their houses."

Just before arriving at Merta we saw a crowd of soldiers at a church on the top of the hill, and found out that the Ras was at church saying his prayers, as it was a saint's day, I believe St Denys', but why he should be celebrated in this country I could not learn, and what he was famous for I have no idea. I waited at the foot of the hill until the Ras came down, and went forward to meet him, when the fine mule on which he was riding, turned round and would not face me; he dismounted and we shook hands, and he laughingly said that neither his mule nor he had seen an Englishman before, but he hoped that they would both know more of them in future. He left a man with me to show me where to camp, and rode on to a neighbouring village, and asked me to come and see him in the afternoon.

We encamped on a nice green about two hundred yards from the gates of the fortified hill on which the Ras has his dwelling and store houses. A small isolated hill is generally chosen to build on, and if some of the sides are very steep, so much the better, as they are easier defended; a thorn zareba is generally placed all round, strengthened with a stout upright palisade, and to each pole is attached another projecting one at about an angle of thirty degrees, the under part of the projecting pole is protected by thorns, so the fence is perfectly unclimbable. The interior of the palisade is supported by a wall of turf about five feet thick and about four feet high, so that two rows of soldiers with rifles can defend it, and shoot through the spaces between the upright poles; a second line of palisades strengthened in front by a ditch is constructed half way up the hill, and the top will be crowned

by the houses belonging to the Ras and his household, also protected by palisades. The lowest enclosure will be devoted to the animals, and where the horses and mules that are required for riding purposes are tethered during the day; the second enclosure will contain soldiers' and servants' houses and vegetable gardens, and the third the houses and the private garden belonging to the Ras.

These fortified positions are quite strong enough to repel any attack made by the people from the low country, or any attack against soldiers armed only with rifles, but being so exposed they could not stand against artillery. There are many of these posts all through Yejju and at every market town, and all the roads from the lower country are thus protected; they serve every purpose, and if the Abyssinians purchase modern artillery as good as that used by their invaders, they will always be difficult places to take, and there will be a severe struggle to subject the country. These forts have nearly always a spring of water within the fortifications, or the water supply is only a few yards outside the gates, and are protected with a guard house, amply fortified so that water can always be procured. All granaries that Ras Woly owns are fireproof, and are roofed over with earth, and the only part that could be burnt is the door; the dwelling houses are however all thatched, and would easily be set on fire.

I remained with the Ras for two whole days and two half days, and I should have enjoyed myself very much had it not been for fever, as I had a three days bout of it, and when the cold access came on I shivered under piles of covers, and with two woollen suits of underclothing, two flannel shirts, a tweed suit and an ulster. It prevented me from going on three occasions to eat with the Ras, as I was invited to every meal during my stay; as it was I had five with him, and his kindness to me was very great, as he knew I was not in a position to give him any present in return.

His house in which he receives is certainly the best I have seen in Abyssinia. It is circular, but with a very wide raised verandah running all round it; the interior is beautifully finished, the roof being decorated with scarlet and dark blue cloth, and the boarding of the ceiling all made of planks of the wanza tree. The posts of juniper that upheld the roof were nicely carved. Many good cupboards of arabesque work, lined the well plastered and neutral tinted walls, the flooring was well cemented and covered with Turkish and Persian carpets; there was also a Bombay black wood sofa

and two armchairs, besides many made of Austrian bent wood, and the whole of the large room was very comfortably furnished for an Abyssinian house.

We had on the low table at meal-times English knives, forks and spoons, as the Ras possessed a good travelling canteen by Mappen, and the plates for a wonder were all of the same colour and kept fairly clean. We were waited on by only two servants. One who had served with Europeans evidently knew what he had to do, and was responsible for serving the meals in a civilised manner. The Ras knew how to use his knife, fork and spoon, and never put the former into his mouth, and he was altogether entirely civilised, although he had seldom seen foreigners. The dishes brought to table were entirely Abyssinian, and were well cooked but of course highly flavoured with red pepper. I particularly remember a roast fillet of beef with new potatoes and a white cream sauce as being very excellent. Schimper and I were the only two guests, and, when I was ill and could not eat with the Ras, Schimper was always invited, and then some of his other high officials had their meals with him.

I had many interesting conversations, and he told me the great difficulty he had with the Yejju people when he first governed the country, and the number of people he had to execute for cold-blooded murders before he could put down the peculiar custom I mentioned before; till now it is not entirely put down, and precautions have to be taken, but the victims now are nearly all strangers from a distance travelling through the country; and of course they have no relations that can complain at the time and demand justice, nor is it always possible to find the murderer, although he would be certain to be among those that had been married since the murder was committed. He spoke in high terms of the fertility of the country and its future, and was thoroughly aware that when Abyssinia was opened up what a rich province Yejju would be; he was very interested in coffee cultivation, and was very pleased when I told him that I had been four years in Ceylon, where the best coffee still came from in spite of the disease that had destroyed the majority of the plantations.

The Ras was also greatly interested when I told him tea ought to do well in his country, and he immediately ordered his servant to fetch some, and, on my telling him when it arrived, it was too strong, he made me make a brew, and when I asked for milk to put in it he seemed quite astonished, as he had only tasted tea made in the Arab fashion. He

seemed to enjoy tea made as we do in England, and said, hereafter he should always drink it made as the English do. I was delighted when he told the servant that he was to send me some down to my camp, as I do not think I had more than an ounce left, and the half pound that I got here helped me on for another week. After that I had to drink nothing but coffee until I arrived at Harar, where I got a further supply from the Indian merchants established at that town.

The Ras seems to be very popular, and governs the country very well, the taxation being a trifle over ten per cent. in kind, which compares very favourably to the much higher taxation in the north. The consequence is that a great many of the northern Christians have come to settle in the province, and spare land is always being taken up. Everyone is obliged to put a certain amount of ground under coffee, so no doubt in a few years the revenue will be greatly increased.

The Azebu Gallas and the Danakils have nearly ceased their raidings on the uplands, as they have been met by soldiers armed with rifles, and they have lost heavily and have also been counter-raided, and many of their cattle have been carried off, so they see that it is not a paying game and now turn their attentions more to the country round Aschangi and to the north as far as the Amba Alagi pass. This district seems to be very badly governed by Ras Mangesha, the same as the whole of Tigré, and it is quite a treat to see what Ras Woly does for everyone, compared to the slipshod way everything is carried on in the north.

During the time I had my shivering fits with fever, the Ras was most kind, and he always had a brazier full of thoroughly dried wild olive wood placed quite close to me. This wood gives out no smoke worth speaking about, and the embers are very hot and give out a great warmth, and on one morning when under my blankets shaking away, he rode past my tent when on his way to church, and finding I was ill, immediately sent back to the house for a brazier to put in my tent. On his return from church the fit had gone over, and he immediately made me come up to his house and sit with him, as he said his house was better than my tent. I relate these little incidents to show what kind people the Abyssinians can be to perfect strangers, and how much some travellers have maligned them. I have never had cause to complain of their private conduct towards me on any occasion, and I believe there are very few thoroughly worthless people in the country, and those perhaps amongst the upper classes

and the soldiery. Under the English advice I believe the country would make rapid strides, and it would only want an English resident, such as are at Indian native courts, with officials like Ras Merconen, Ras Woly, Waag Choum Gangul, Ras Michael, and others of this class to make Abyssinia a very go-ahead country, and insure entire internal tranquillity, which a king of kings can never give.

Abyssinia governed by a number of minor princes would never be a menace to the peace and development of North Eastern Africa, whereas at present it is very hard to say what its future may be: its past has been a troublesome one.

I was quite sorry to leave lovely Merta with its charming ruler, he had been so kind to me, and fed up all my servants, and given me every thing I could want, and had during the whole time I was there, treated me in a most princely manner. His interest in everything English was unbounded, and Schimper had to sit up late at night with him, explaining Whitaker's Almanac, which is a perfect Arabian Night's story to them in every way, and the figures it contains as to banking, revenue and commercial statistics seem to them to be fabulous. They all seem to be highly indignant that so little notice is taken of Abyssinia, but they were nearly all delighted that they were mentioned amongst the Christians of the world. I think the one thing that astonished them most, was that the Christian religion was not near the largest in the world, and that Buddhists and Brahmins, who they had not heard about, alone exceeded the Christians of all denominations.

I used to make the most of what our Navy was, and the number of steamers we possessed, as anyone who had been to Jerusalem used always to confirm what I said, saying: "Yes, nearly all the steamers on the sea that we saw were English." I also explained that England being an island, did not want so many soldiers as other countries, and that no one could come to us as our fleet would prevent them (I hope it will in time of need), and that no one need be a soldier or sailor unless they wanted to, and not even our Government could make them as yet, that our army and navy were all volunteers. When asked whether I was a soldier, I said "no," that I wanted to be one, but was not strong enough, and I am afraid I said that all our soldiers were now bigger and stronger than I was. One old man who had seen our troops in the 1868 expedition said, now he remembered, they were very big men, and I was quite right, so as he confirmed

what I said, I had to tell no more untruths, so perhaps he saved me a lot more black marks on the debit side in my ledger above.

They had seen the Italian prisoners on their way to the south, and as a rule the Italian is not a big man, but I told them that they were much finer men than the French, which as a rule they are, and I led them to believe that the English were the biggest and strongest men that existed, and that I was only a baby compared to most of my fellow countrymen.

The weather at Merta, which is situated on higher ground than the majority of the Yejju province was beautiful, the temperature never being too great, whereas in the sub-tropical valley, it was occasionally very hot in the middle of the day. We had several showers and a thunderstorm during our stay, which freshened up the vegetation and helped to bring out the flowering plants of many descriptions, and the bean, pea and linseed crops ladened the air with their perfume. The white flowers of the beans, pink and purple of the peas (they have very few white peas in Abyssinia), the light blue of the linseed, the yellow of the noug, and the bright scarlet patches of the red pepper pods drying in the fields, gave a charming colour to the landscape which was also set off by the water in the river and different irrigation channels that everywhere crossed and recrossed the country.

Elephants from the low country sometimes visit Yejju, and the Ras showed me a pair of very fine tusks from one that he had killed within a few miles of Waldea about two months before; he was a very good sportsman and very fond of shooting and had several very good English guns, and even in this country the people prefer guns of London make to any others, and nearly all the men look between the barrels to see whether the word London is marked on them. I believe it is the only English word they know.

We got away from Merta on Sunday the 25th October. I struck camp at daylight intending to make an early start as I felt better with no trace of fever, but so deaf from quinine that I could not hear the ticking of my watch when placed at either ear. The Ras rode past on his way to church and asked me to send my luggage on, and Schimper and I to breakfast with him on his return from praying. He gave us a first rate breakfast and asked me if I wanted any quinine to take with me, and before leaving gave me nearly half an ounce out of his stock, he had every English sort of

medicine that was any good and also a great many Italian ones that he had procured at the battle of Adowa, but he did not know the use of them, and Schimper, who is a very fair "bush" doctor, had to write their names in Abyssinian on the labels and what they were for, and a dose for an adult; the Ras laughingly said it would be a good thing as there was now less chance of his poisoning some one or perhaps himself. After saying goodbye, which I did with extreme regret and a pressing invitation to come and see him again the next time I visited Abyssinia, I took my leave and we rode quickly nearly due south to overtake our baggage that had had a good two hours start of us.

We crossed two spurs dividing different valleys that ran at right angles to our road and passed three good sized streams, besides many brooks all running to join the Meli river. The country was very fertile and thickly populated, and continued so until we arrived early in the afternoon at Bohoro village in the valley of the Chekosa, and encamped near the church of Grum Gorgio. We were well received by the Choum and had no trouble with our rations either for ourselves or the party of wounded, who have been reduced in numbers and now only consisted of three, but the wife of Ras Mangesha's head artilleryman and her servants still remain with us.

My fever had entirely left me and I was very much better, and although we had a very heavy dew and camped on the dryest ground we could find, which was damp, and all our things were wet in the morning, I had no further access. As if the Ras had not done enough for me, just as we were getting ready to leave he sent me a present of a splendid riding mule, a perfect beauty and very quiet. He sent his apologies for not presenting it while I was there and would take no refusal about my not accepting it, so I made Schimper write a letter of thanks in my name, and gave the servant that brought it as big a backsheesh as I could afford, and sent him back rejoicing. I shall never forget the kindness that I received at Ras Woly's hands, and here was a present of an animal worth at least 80 to 90 dollars at the coast, and I had nothing to give in return.

Ras Aloula was also another man that gave princely presents, and many of the other big men are most lavish in their hospitality, and I never could make out why the Abyssinians get the name of being close fisted and stingy, as all the years I have known them from prince to peasant

I have found them open hearted, charitable and kind people; of course there are exceptions, but they are few and far between, and they are generally to be found near the main highways where some of the people have had cause to distrust Europeans.

Supplies were most plentiful at Bohoro, and everything was remarkably cheap. I bought forty fresh eggs for one salt; at Macalle 22 bars of salt go for a dollar so this works out at 880 eggs for the dollar, and as it now runs with the depreciated value of silver about ten to the £ sterling, this coin would purchase the enormous number of 8800 if one continues the arithmetic sum, enough eggs to last a household for a year. Small chickens could be bought four for a salt or at the rate of 880 for the £, and the small sort of sheep at half a dollar or about 1s. each; grain was a trifle dearer, but still barley came to about half a dollar a sack of about 120 lbs., or less than £1 per ton. If there was a large demand for grain, the Yejju province could grow a great deal more than it does now, as I do not believe a fourth of the available ground is under cultivation, and as a stock-raising country it would be famous as it contains so many water meadows and luxuriant grass covered uplands.

After leaving Bohoro the road winds a great deal but still keeping in a southerly direction, with a deviation east and west of south sometimes as much as twenty degrees. More spurs are crossed until Aleka Egsow is reached, and during the march we crossed many more streams running to the east, carrying the drainage of the highlands in the neighbourhood of Magdala towards the Golima.

Here as Hailou is getting further away from Ras Woly, he has begun his quarrels with the peasantry about food; he was talked to most seriously by the Ras about ill treating the countrymen, and now he tries to get dollars from the Choums and Chickas instead of food as we cannot consume the rations we are on, they having been increased in quantity.

My cook has been very ill with fever and quite unable to work, and to make matters worse Schimper's servant, that can also cook a little, has been ill, and has developed a disease that made it impossible for him to touch anything eatable, and what with want of soap nearly everyone has developed the itch which has evidently spread from some of the wounded that were left behind at Waldea, and it is a case of scratch, scratch, scratch. We have had therefore hardly anything to eat since leaving Merta, and my Abyssinian cook

has to be watched as he is sometimes half mad, and his last attempt at cooking ended up in his going to sleep and allowing everything to burn, and nearly spoiling all the cooking utensils, and he put nearly all the knives and forks and all the spoons into the fire to clean, and I am now left with only one of each and the spoon has only got part of the bowl. This cook has been entirely spoilt by his former Italian masters, and when I first got him at Abbi-Addi he badly wanted to have his dinner with me in the tent, and when I told him to get out he said the Italian officers that he had served before always allowed him to eat with them. Day by day from this place he got worse and worse till Schimper, Hadgi Ali and I had to do the whole of the work ourselves, and we were often so tired when we got into camp that it was late on in the night before we got anything to eat, and when we got into the cold, damp and uninteresting Wollo and Shoa countries, we often went supperless to bed, and we often looked back upon our stay at Merta with pleasure and thought of the many pleasant dinners we had when we were living in the richer northern part of Abyssinia.

As soon as our tea was done we had to drink coffee sweetened with honey, and our food was what the country produced as we absolutely had nothing European left. The washing soap was all finished long ago ; we had very little shipti or native soap left. Candles had been finished days ago, and we had to make them ourselves out of the bees-wax we bought and clarified ourselves. The wicks were made out of one or two common strips of Manchester cotton cloth partly unravelled, and then lightly twisted, melted bees-wax was poured over the wicks and then allowed to harden, and then more wax was poured over until the candles were of a convenient thickness ; they gave a very good light and we were soon very expert at making them. Schimper at last made a couple of moulds, but the candles turned out from them were no superior in light-giving power than those roughly made, and as they took longer the manufacture of the rougher ones was continued, and as they cost little we always had plenty of light in our tents at night. A saucepan to melt the wax and a spoon for putting it over the wick was all the machinery required.

Clarifying honey was another amusement, as having no sugar we had to use it instead : the honey was always sold in earthenware jars with very small openings, so it was like buying a pig in a poke, and one could never tell how much

good clear honey could be obtained from our purchase, sometimes not more than twenty per cent. The Somalis always stole the honey on every possible occasion and once or twice they made themselves very ill by eating too much; having no corks to close the bottles, we had to use the interior of the maize cobs instead, and they could be easily pulled out; on one occasion I expostulated with Hadgi-Ali about taking the best honey that Schimper and I reserved for ourselves, and he indignantly denied touching it; the bottle was empty and full of bees that are just as great thieves as the Somalis, and come to carry away the honey they have been robbed of. On asking the Hadgi how the stopper got out, he replied, "the bees had done it, and had also eaten all the honey." This was a new natural history fact to me, that bees could draw corks, and on asking how they did it, he replied that they stuck their stings into the cob, and then flapped their wings so that they drew the stopper out, and if one was not strong enough, others helped, but they were bound to get the honey; he had often seen them doing it: however, curiously enough, they never did it to our honey afterwards, as it was always kept in the tent, and on asking the Hadgi why the bees did not pull the stoppers out of the bottles in the tent, he said he supposed they were afraid to. If ever I wanted to get a rise out of him afterwards before Europeans I used to ask him to tell what the bees did in Yejju.

The road from Aleka Egsow to Meli valley alters considerably as an intervening ridge of high hills separates the waters of the Golima from that of the Meli, about half way a very large forest of sycamore fig trees is reached; this collection of giant trees is most superb, and there are the three distinct kinds growing together, that hitherto I had not seen in the country. In many places no vestige of sun ever penetrates through the foliage and the undergrowth is thick and nearly impossible to penetrate; it is said to be a very feverish place and no one ever thinks of camping in it at night-time. I saw plenty of orchids on the branches, but none of them were in flower, so I cannot say, if there is anything new to be procured, but doubtless, something worth having might be found, as Schimper's father had never collected in this district. The vegetation was semi-tropical, and from the valley within half a mile the mountains abruptly rose in ever increasing heights towards Magdala on which nothing but cold country trees and flowers grew.

After this forest is passed Ras Woly's territory ceases,

and the district of Witchali-Melaki is entered, belonging to Ras Michael, whom I saw a great deal of at Adowa in 1884; he was an adopted son of King Johannes, and commanded the Galla troops at that time, who formed the king's escort. Witchali-Melaki is the most northern district of the Wollo Galla country. Just after leaving the forest we got into a less wooded country, the majority of the trees being the wanza all in full bloom with their large trusses of white flowers, round which the bees swarmed. The country here was lovely, and the wanza trees in flower are quite as handsome as any English horse-chestnut of which they remind one.

While riding quietly along with my syce, a peasant armed with a lance came in front of me and stopped my mule, and threw himself on the ground and commenced to cry. He asked me why did my servants steal, and why I robbed poor people. I was of course very indignant, and said neither I nor my servants did anything of the sort, and on enquiry I found that our escort had stolen a favourite goat belonging to the man's children, and had said it was for me. The two soldiers that had stolen the goat came up with it dragging it along. I made them undo the string by which they had secured it, and on the peasant calling the goat, it immediately ran up to him, and put its fore feet on his chest, and began bleating, there could be no doubt of the ownership and the animal being a pet. These vile soldiers wanted to eat a tame animal like this. I told the peasant that he must not think that Englishmen did such things, and asked him to remain until Hailou came up. I asked for the punishment of the soldiers, which he refused, and one of the guilty said that Hailou had told him to take a goat whenever he could, so I had a letter written to Ras Woly, explaining what a rascal Hailou was, and that if anything had been stolen by my escort in his country, that I was not responsible. To the peasant I gave a couple of coloured handkerchiefs for his wife, and he returned as pleased as possible, the goat gamboling round him.

We encamped shortly after this, and in the evening the peasant came back to see me with a big jar of fresh milk and some eggs, and brought his pretty little girl about seven years old to see the Englishman who did not steal her goat; she was timid at first but soon made friends, and as I had a dollar with a hole in it, which no one would take in the markets, I strung it on her blue cord round her neck. This man lived

about eight miles further back on the road, so he had a sixteen mile walk just to bring me a little offering for returning him his own property, wrongfully taken away. I could give many instances of how grateful the peasantry are when they are treated only fairly, and how easy they are to get on with. If I had resented as some people would have done, the armed peasant stopping me, there would no doubt have been a row, and I might have got speared and the man killed, and then perhaps a paragraph in the papers would have appeared, that I had been killed quarrelling with the dangerous inhabitants of the country, whereas, what I have seen of the Abyssinians if one treats them honourably they are most easy to get on with, and the only danger is from rascally servants and escorts.

I am sorry to say, however, I have met with people who call themselves Englishmen and gentlemen, who treat the natives with contempt or familiarity, both extremes being perfectly wrong, and who are always objecting to some damned dirty nigger, as they call the natives, coming near them, or others will show them monkey tricks or play practical jokes, all of which only make them lose dignity, and lower them in the eyes of the inhabitants. No man ought to pioneer unless he has a good temper, and unless he makes up his mind to treat the people he comes across in an honourable and straightforward manner. Without his doing the latter it is impossible for him to know the people of the country he passes through, and latterly I have read some accounts of travels that have been received by the public at home, without one murmur of protest, and the travellers have been well received, whereas they ought to be exposed, and strict orders ought to be given by our home authorities, that they should never again pass through territory under English influence.

I have the greatest contempt for two sorts of individuals. The one is the traveller who goes into a land and ill treats the natives who will not retaliate, as their only means is by killing their oppressor, which they have no wish to do; and the other is the so-called sportsman, who kills animals just to say how many of each sort he has killed, and shoots females and young, and leaves their rotting carcases on the ground without utilising a particle of them. It is no use mentioning names, some of these gentlemen by birth are known, and I only hope steps will be taken to prevent them molesting the two and four-legged animals of Africa in future.

After the incident of stealing the goat, I told Hailou and

the escort that I should have nothing more to do with them ; they knew I could not run away and I should speak to all the head men myself and ask for food to be sold to my party, as I had enough dollars to last me to Adese-Ababa where I could most likely get more, as there was certain to be someone I knew there who would let me have money. Hereafter, with the exception of two of the friendly soldiers, I had nothing to do with Hailou or the escort, and pitched camp away from them, and would not give them a particle of food except on special occasions, and I was very pleased to see that they very often got little or nothing, both in the Wollo country and in Shoa until Adese-Ababa was reached. The quarrels between the peasantry and Hailou were of daily occurrence, but they did not hurt me in the least, and I only laughed when they got the worst of it. The pleasure of travelling was entirely spoilt, and our marches were nearly always off the main road to distant villages in order to get supplies for the escort. One thing it gave me more chance of seeing the country than if I had stuck to the usual highway generally traversed when going from north to south. The chief towns, however, we had to visit, and we had also to pass the different posts where customs dues are levied, as no one is allowed to take the other paths unless provided with a special pass.

Travellers often complain of delay in Abyssinia, but no European is allowed to enter into the country without the permission of the ruler, nor can he leave without a pass. In Admiral Hewett's mission to Abyssinia, his officers were prevented from leaving certain points without the required document, and no bribe or persuasion would make the official let them proceed until he had received a written order. There can be no doubt that this prevents Europeans spying out the country, and as all frontier officials have this order given them, they are perfectly right to stop people either coming in or going out unless they have proper credentials ; no sentry allows any one to go past him without the password for the day, and still Europeans complain about an unnecessary delay because they have not their papers in order.

CHAPTER XVII

WOLLO COUNTRY AND THE GALLAS

OUR camping place was at the head waters of the Meli river at the upper end of the Meli valley, not far from a very pretty little lake. This sheet of water is about a mile long by about four hundred yards broad, and looks like the oval crater of an old extinct volcano, and is surrounded by very high land except near the exit which forms the main sources of the Meli. The lake takes its name from the village of Golvo, perched on a small isolated table-land. This village, although very small, boasts a church of San Michael, a very nice little building situated in a pretty grove of very large Wanza trees, and a large village green on which a market is held every Monday, it being a great interchanging place for the products of semi-tropical Yejju and the colder Wollo country.

Above the village green is a Mohamedan cemetery, and from one side of it there is a sheer drop to the lake of over three hundred feet; sitting on this cliff a very pretty view is obtained of the lake and its surroundings; several springs are situated on the side nearest the mountains to the east, these run across the flat for about forty yards, and enter the lake; the lawn that these springs water is a beautiful vivid green, then a small shore of white sand and then a margin of shallow water, and then the dark indigo blue of the deep water. Several isolated sycamore fig trees of large size hung their branches over the lake on the east side; on the north there was a fringe of reeds and then scrub and Wanza trees on the shelving side of the mountain; the west end of the lake was shallow, and also shaded by enormous sycamores, whereas the southern side was partly bordered by cultivated fields and sloping land leading up to the abrupt sided plateau, whereon was situated the market place and village of Golvo with its tree-surrounded church.

I sat watching the fish rising in the water beneath me,

the grebes, coots and water hens swimming about, and several broods of wild ducks about the size of a pochard that I examined carefully through my binoculars, were quite new to me. I was so taken up with the view and nature that I had not noticed a storm coming up, and a loud thunderclap startled me out of my reverie, and before I could get back to my camp, a little over half-a-mile off, I was drenched to the skin, which brought on another bout of fever. How it did rain and thunder, and it was late on in the evening before the storm went over, and then a dead calm came on and the cold towards morning was very great, as we had come up considerably since leaving Aleka Egsow. We had a beautiful morning after the rain, and the francolin were calling all round us, and perched on the trees and rocks sunning themselves, as the undergrowth and crops were all wet after the night's rain.

As the escort did not turn up from the village, I started without them after writing a letter to Ras Michael to say I was coming and could I visit him; I had an idea I should meet him at Boru Meida, one of the chief towns of his governorate, two marches from here. I turned due east, as through my glasses I could see the main road about three miles off in the valley, and the Meli river running on the further side of it, and with my map and compass, I did not want Hailou to show me the way; he hated my map and he wanted to know what Europeans wanted with these things on countries that did not belong to them. The names on the Italian maps are misleading, as large districts are sometimes called after insignificant villages and vice versa. We are now travelling in the district of Witchali Rutamba, governed by Fituari Taferi, who is away with the Ras.

We followed the main road, and came across some soldiers going south to meet some of the wounded. One of them was the brother of the youth with one leg who has been with us since Macalle, and whom I have done all I can for. As he was just behind me, I waited to see the meeting, and I thought they never would have done kissing each other. The elder brother was crying at seeing his younger brother with only one leg, and all at once the elder brother made a rush at me. Luckily I got on my mule in time, so he could only catch hold of my leg. This was kissed and slobbered over and dirtied with the grease off his hair, and I had to ask him to leave off as I thought his brother

would like some more, and I had had ample to repay what I had done. However the poor fellow meant well, and he did everything he could to prove his gratitude for many days after.

In the afternoon we passed the hot springs of Jari, situated about two miles to the west of the road, where Ras Michael had just left for Magdala, where he was going on business. The country opens out here, and three streams of fair size run from the west to join the Meli, the one coming from Jari being even here, two miles off from the springs, quite tepid. We passed a great number of people to-day going to Grana, a big market town in Yejju, just to the east of the road we came by. Grana market day is on Thursdays, Golvo on Mondays. The former is by far the most important of the two, as it is visited by Danakils from the low country, besides Yejju and Wollo people; it is noted for its large cattle-market.

Here, after following the Meli for about three miles, we went off the road to the village of Woha Eilou, a property belonging to Queen Taitou, the wife of King Menelek. The man in charge was very civil, and gave us everything that he had of the best, besides a jar of very fine tedj. When we arrived it was raining hard, and he put Schimper and I up in his house, and the female portion of the establishment crowded round us to have a long look at the Englishman. Next morning I was shown over the estate, which was well cared for and produced a great quantity of corn, and a good deal of butter was made. Besides these two very necessary articles, three houses were full of bee hives, and the honey taken from the wanza flowers being greatly prized, as being of a white colour makes very clear tedj. This honey is sent to Adese-Ababa for the queen's use.

Our march from Woha Eilou was again along the main road in the same Meli valley, our course being slightly east of south to turn an out-jutting spur that runs nearly south-east of Magdala, and continues until Haïk lake is reached. This district is called until Haïk is come to Aforcordat Ambazel. The majority of it is very fertile, with good water meadows and many irrigation channels, which give a large supply of water even in the dryest of seasons. The weather was terrible until we began to rise the spur, driving rain and Scotch mist and a cold wind blowing from the south. At the top of the rise from the valley the wind suddenly ceased, and the sun came out very strong, which

soon dried our wet clothes, and we began to get warmer. On getting to the top of the spur, the village of Arkeesa is reached, from which a beautiful view of lake Hark is obtained, situated in an amphitheatre of rugged mountains with juniper-clad sides. The lake is about six miles long by about two broad and very deep, no doubt the crater of some extinct volcano.

There are several small islets and one big high island divided from the shore by a channel some three hundred yards in breadth; on this island is the church of Mariam Deva, and a monastery, with a few other buildings, inhabited by the monks; there is also a little cultivation, quite enough to feed the occupiers of the island. No women are allowed to set foot on the island, the same as in many of the Abyssinian monasteries on the high ambas, and the Adams that spend their lives on the island never have the chance of falling by the machinations of some dusky Eve.

I tried hard to be allowed to get permission to visit the place, but Hailou would not let me, so we proceeded along the winding Arkeesa pass which runs round a narrow deep valley down which a stream runs to the lake, the end of the valley finishes up with a cliff down which a tiny waterfall leaps from ledge to ledge. Many varied and pretty views of the lake are obtained from this pass, and the scenery is very grand. While we passed, the frequent rain storms, with intervals of bright sunshine, gave many varied lights and shades to the landscape, and at one time a double rainbow resting over the lake that reflected its colours added to the beauty of the scene. We turned sharp to the south south-west after finishing the pass and went up hill along a narrow grass valley with high mountains on each side dotted over with woods and coppices of juniper trees all festooned with the "old man's beard" moss. It was bitterly cold, and we floundered along through deep black peaty soil, the road always slightly rising; I should not like to say how many snipe we put up, and the constant "scape" "scape" when they rose, put me in mind of warmer days in Ceylon, when I used to enjoy the snipe-shooting and make big bags; every valley must have an end, and at last we arrived at the further extremity covered with mud, cold and hungry.

Here we left behind us the drainage to the east, and a quarter of a mile on the flat, the upper valley of the Bashilo drainage lay in front of us. This river first runs north-west and then takes a turn to the south and joins the Blue Nile,

the direct drainage to the Blue Nile proper is not met with till some distance further on. On one side of the valley to the west is the large town of Boru Meida, built on the side of the mountain and covering a large area; it is surrounded by cultivated fields on three sides, and the other is open to a large village green, which gives place to a large marsh that takes up the centre of the valley, a line of grass fields and cultivation takes up the other side, and then on a fairly well wooded ridge is situated the pretty little village of Boru Sandatch, where we camped and remained the whole of the next day. The view farther south was blocked by undulating downs with very little timber, and in the middle distance was the rather broken-up lower down land of Dissei; the large fortified hill and granaries of Dissei being due south of our camp.

I was asked by Hailou to camp the other side of the valley at Boru Meida, two miles to the west, which I declined to do, as I had no wish to be near a big town, and I could see everything I wanted, and I doubted whether we should be able to find a cleaner and more sheltered spot than what I had chosen. I sadly wanted a rest, the two rainy days had dirtied everything, and the last bit of mud floundering into this place had put the final touches on everything. Schimper having a female relation belonging to his mother's family living at Boru Meida, he went off to visit her; I suggested that he should ask her to get our things washed, fortunately we were enabled to put everything in order, and had we not stopped here I do not know what we should have done, as on taking stock and cleaning up I found that I had nothing much left—tea spoilt, quinine broken, salts nearly all spoilt, and very few left fit to purchase anything with; our money being dollars we could not afford to spend one every time we wanted to purchase something, and a dollar's worth of eggs, chickens or food, was a great deal more than we required; and although we had a good many mules with us, two to three cwts. of barley, that is about an equivalent to this coin, was a great deal too much, and necessitated extra transport or overloading our mules.

We managed to lay in a stock of good coffee, plenty of clean honey, we purified our bar salt, got a lot of red pepper, ground plenty of good white wheat flour, cooking butter and a lot of lentils, and what with meat that we could purchase en route, our commissariat was reduced to these things only; our cook was still useless, so Schimper and his servant Hadgi Ali and I did the cooking together; the fare was plain and

wholesome, and as long as we kept well and had hunger for sauce, we could not starve.

While Schimper was away seeing his relation, I went down to the marsh to see what I could get; the geese were flying about and calling to each other with their peculiar harsh cry of honk-honk, so I knew I should be able to get some of them if everything else failed. The marsh near the sides was not more than eighteen inches deep, and round the margin was lined with rushes, reeds, and the blue, white, purple, and yellow iris with other water-plants, and plenty of large forget-me-not. I soon came to an open pond covered with birds of all sorts, but all out of range, so I sat down in the reeds and waited; there were ducks in all stages of growth, from full fledged to tiny little things just hatched, they were very tame and soon swam up to within fifteen yards of me; soon about twenty came from another pond and settled in the grass, I gave them two barrels and got five, and on the report of the gun, hundreds and hundreds of birds rose out of the marsh, geese, ducks of many sorts, pewits and other plover, besides herons, bitterns, cranes, ibio and egrets. I watched them flying about for a long time, and they again settled quite close, but as I had enough for the pot and I never care to kill for killing sake, I picked up my ducks, which two small boys who had been watching me with curiosity carried for me, and I walked back to the tent; shooting two plump snipe on my way back. Snipe were very numerous and of three sorts, the common, the jack, and the painted; the latter is, I believe more of the rail species than the snipe, as it swims remarkably well.

I remember the first time I saw it swimming was in Ceylon, when a pair of old ones with three small ones that could not fly were crossing the Warkwalla river; I bagged the old birds, and caught the three young ones, and brought them alive into Galla and after showing them to an officer in the Royal Artillery who was a very good naturalist, we let them loose in the fort ditch; I have often seen in print it doubted that the painted snipe will take to the water, but I have seen them on several occasions.

We had a capital dinner that night, and I mention it as it was about the last one we had till we arrived at Adese-Ababa, and the last fresh green peas, beans and new potatoes that we obtained until we left Adese-Ababa; hitherto we had had these excellent vegetables nearly daily since arriving at Axum from Erithrea. Duck and green peas, fresh lentil

soup, snipe and new potatoes, and stewed mutton with young beans forming the menu ; we ended up with hot punch made from good native spirit sent us by Schimper's relative, with honey instead of sugar and fresh limes, most warming as the night was bitterly cold.

Boru Meida market is held every Saturday, and it is a very large one and there are several resident Moslem and Christian merchants who buy up the small parcels of coffee and beeswax brought in by the peasants from the surrounding country, and the ostrich feathers and eggs, and sometimes a little ivory brought from the Danakil country ; these latter products are exchanged for grain, and cotton cloths manufactured in this town and the surrounding villages from cotton grown in Yejju.

The road from Boru Meida to Velan, our next camping ground, is slightly west of south for the first part, and then south, south-west ; it runs through a succession of valleys separated from each other by nearly bare grass and barley covered hills, with only small clumps of trees round the villages ; the bottoms of all the valleys are marsh and water meadow, crowded with ducks of many kinds, geese, snipe, and other water-loving birds, and the country for small game is a real sportsman's paradise.

During the early part of the day, we met hundreds of people with large quantities of live stock bound to Boru Meida market, and a servant of Queen Taitou's with many mules laden with presents from her for her niece Mrs Mangesha, the rains having prevented the wedding presents from being sent before. We also met a choum of the country between Entiscio and Adowa, who has the old city of Yeha in his district. This man had been dismissed from his position by Ras Mangesha, and had appealed to King Menelek, who had re-installed him. I had met him before and he was a great friend of Schimper's, and from him we got the news that Ras Aloula, Ras Mangesha, Ras Woly, and the Waag Choum had to send a force to punish the Azebus for their cruelty to the King's troops.

There can be no doubt that they are far from pleasant people, and not only do they kill Abyssinians but white people ; they murdered two of Ras Woly's Italian prisoners and castrated a third, who now has to work for them at all sorts of hard jobs ; however, I should not mind visiting their country in spite of everyone else having failed. I have met some of them good-looking fellows but a bit wild, and I was

told by them that they would take me to their country; whether I came back would be another question. They are nasty neighbours, but then their neighbours are nasty to them, so the fault is most likely on both sides.

I here received a letter from Ras Michael saying how sorry he was not to have seen me, and that he had expected me a week before, but as I had not arrived he had to leave for the Magdala district on business. He had given orders that I was to have everything I wanted, but he said no word about my escort and Hailou. I had the pleasure of seeing Hailou refused food by the villagers, and here, near Ras Michael's private house, he can get nothing. This establishment belonging to Ras Michael is exactly the same as that belonging to Ras Woly, but the hill on which it is placed is more rugged and better fortified; it is situated in a narrow grass valley with only a few trees that could be counted on the fingers of two hands, opening on to the larger valley of Gerado, another of these long marsh and water meadow bits of country with two big mountains at the east end well wooded with juniper.

At the village of Velan I saw the only garden of poppies that I have come across in Abyssinia, the flower, a large white papery one with a large head; the man whom it belonged to was a bit of a native doctor and used the heads as medicine, but I could get nothing out of him how he originally got the poppy or what he used it for, these were his secrets and he was not inclined to give himself away by being communicative. Both at Velan and our next camping-place at Geri-Maida we had nothing but rain and it was bitterly cold, and although the road was more or less bog, we were glad to get off and walk to keep ourselves warm, and I was none too warm walking even with my heavy ulster on. The country is a fine grazing district but very monotonous, with nothing but barley and a little wheat in the shape of crops. Horses, mules, and black-horned cattle and black sheep everywhere, it being a great stock-raising place. The scenery, uninteresting, bold, open and rolling down lands, with big chains of higher hills and isolated mountains nearly bare of trees, with the exception of a few patches of juniper and immense kousso trees with their Indian red trunks.

The people are nearly all Mahomedans or profess to be of this religion, but they are all indescribably dirty with filthy clothes, it being too cold to wash and both soap or its

substitute the shipti unknown. The men are a fine race, thick-set and large-limbed with plenty of hair about them, a great comparison to the northerners who have little hair either on their faces or bodies; the women are round, fat, ungraceful, broad-buttocked, large-sterned, coarse, ugly things, and about as unlovely as the female sex possibly could be, but at the same time good-tempered and always laughing. Their mouths being great gashes across their faces filled with wonderfully even white teeth, but their dirt and smell are simply unbearable; no beauty is to be looked for south of Yejju, except amongst the Amharans or true Abyssinians, and I cannot make out how the eastern and western Gallas can belong to the same race, as the women of the western Gallas are slight, graceful little things with pretty hands and feet, and the eastern have large feet and hands of the most hideous shape, and their hair is also of a much coarser description. The eastern men and women have that horrible racial fœtor of the negro, while in the western it is entirely lacking.

The houses in the Wollo Galla country have changed in shape from those of the north, and are oblong with a pair of flat sides; they are dirtier and not nearly so well made. The last village with a proper hedge or fortification round it was that of Arkessa near Haik, here they only had a slight ditch and a turf or low stone wall, no protection against man, but sufficient to keep the animals from straying; this showed that the country through which we were passing was a peaceful one, and no raids were feared from the low country as farther north.

Geri Meida was a particularly cold place, and on the summits of the hills we again saw the peculiar gevara or lobelia, and the fauna was altogether of an Alpine nature. Soon after leaving Geri Meida, a large tract of country is reached, thickly wooded with the kousso tree, hitherto it has only been in isolated groups, this country owing to its height and dampness does not evidently suffer from the grass fires that sweep over the downs at lower elevations. Soon after passing this kousso forest, the road leads over a piece of bitter cold wind-swept land, where wheat is not grown, owing to the frosts that sometimes occur when the wheat is in flower, and that spoil the crop. The road then leads down into a better and more fertile country, in which many larger clefts are found; these being sheltered from the wind have a much warmer climate, and contain trees, shrubs and

plants that will not grow in the open. The grass here improves and we passed many splendid herds of the large black cattle for which the Wollo country is so famed, and vast flocks of large black sheep with long and heavy fleeces. These animals in shape and size are very like those of Central Arabia that are brought to Mecca when the Hadj falls in the cold season, but during the summer and hot months these animals cannot travel, as they die in large numbers from the heat. Why is it that these class of sheep are only found in cold Central Arabia, and in the perhaps colder Wollo country?

At Adis Amba the district of Dedjatch Imma the country begins to improve, and a church is again seen, the last one was near Ras Michael's place at Velan; here a mixed population is found, and the houses and gardens are better; about an hour's march from Adis Amba, the road divides at one of these clefts or ravines; the one on the west side is the high road to the south, and the one on the east to Adis Amba where it ends. To the east of Adis Amba is a fairly high mountain, and the drainage from its east side runs to the Danakil country, and from the west to the Blue Nile; the canyons formed by the drainage cannot be passed by human beings, so Adis Amba district is entirely cut off from the south, and the only road round is through the Danakil country, and then by a very bad and precipitous path.

Dedjatch Imma's house is built on the edge of the canyon and the high road is only about seven hundred to eight hundred yards distant on the opposite side, but to get from his house to the high road, it takes over an hour and a half, as the bottom of the valley has to be followed for a long time before there is a path that leads to the top on the other side.

Dedjatch Imma was away on business, but as soon as I got to his house, his people sent away a messenger to say that I had arrived. We had a most terrible storm, rain and sleet and thunder and lightning that came on about five o'clock in the afternoon, and lasted till ten o'clock, when it ceased and a dead calm came on, and not a cloud was to be seen, and the stars in the black heavens looked of an unnaturally large size. Sleep was impossible owing to the cold and the dogs chasing the hyenas; one of the latter must have evidently had a very bad cold as he was very hoarse, and the Abyssinian servants said he was a "budha" or evil spirit; while others said it was a man that had taken the shape of a hyena, so he could enjoy a meal of carrion or dead

man. As I could not sleep I sat and listened to their stories which are most amusing, but they show a great deal of imagination and superstition.

The budha or evil spirit that attacks some of the young women, nearly always ugly virgins or hysterical and plain looking girls that men will never notice, is to my mind the greatest fraud of all their superstitions. Everyone has written about it, and I am afraid that they have drawn a good deal on their imagination, and the missionaries who have visited the country have perhaps been quite as bigoted as the people they have tried to describe. I believe that these peculiar fits which the women have, when they do all sorts of filthy things, is nothing more than hysteria; many women even in civilised countries are not responsible for their actions when suffering from these complaints, and people who are inclined to believe in the miraculous, take for granted what the ignorant peasantry say. I have seen several young women suffering from the "budha," and a bucket of cold water that I have thrown over them, and a good smacking from my servant, has soon sent the devil away, and the only after effect has been that they have been sulky, because they were not made much of.

At an early hour I sent my luggage on, as it had to return and go by the high road, and waited for Dedjatch Imma, who had sent me a message to say he was returning and wished to see me, and while waiting for him I saw five Italian prisoners, who were all walking arm and arm, and singing, and seemed thoroughly happy; they seemed surprised to see a European, and they had a long chat with me. They had no complaints to make, except that they had little or nothing to do. They spoke most highly of Dedjatch Imma, who gave them as much to eat and drink as they possibly could want; they were all smoking native grown tobacco out of pipes they had manufactured themselves, and their clothes were made out of native-made cloth. One had his helmet left, the others had country straw hats which were all covered with long tail feathers from the cocks they had eaten, and by the number they had in their hats, they must have been getting tired of chicken. The luggage having left, I could not give them paper and pen and ink to write to their friends, but I took their names, and reported them as well.

Soon after Dedjatch Imma rode up, and he immediately asked me if I thought his prisoners looked well, and he said he intended, if he could, to make them as fat as he was. The

Dedjatch is an immensely stout big man, over six feet four inches, and weighs, I should think, considerably over 20 stone. He was about forty-five years old, and had a most merry looking face; he said he was hungry, and immediately ordered breakfast, inviting Schimper and I to it. We had a very well cooked meal, everything being very clean, the most excellent tedj and coffee, and glasses of very old native spirit. The master of the house evidently knows how to live, and likes the good things of this world; as soon as the food was taken away, the first question he asked me, with a broad smile on his face, was whether I considered him too fat to fight, as the king said he was, and would not let him go to the wars; there was no doubt that very few of the horses in the country could carry him, so I told him he ought to ride an elephant, which pleased him greatly. He seemed a charming man, and like very big fat giants very good tempered; he had begged to have some Italian prisoners to take care of, and he had done everything possible for them and allowed them to do everything they liked. I had a most pressing invitation to stay, and had to promise if I returned this way I would stop with him. His household, in his absence, had done everything for me, and I was much pleased with his neat clean house, garden and premises. He sent one of his servants on with me to our next camping-place to Yerbello, to see that I was properly attended to, and I shall always look back at meeting Dedjatch Imma with pleasure, as he was a perfect specimen of what an Abyssinian gentleman can be; gentlemen are gentlemen all over the world, no matter what their colour may be.

We took a bridle path down the gorge, on the top of which Adis Amba is built, and the change of climate is most marked. At the bottom of the gorge near a small waterfall, which serves to irrigate it, is a garden and summer-house belonging to the Dedjatch, which grows everything tropical, including bananas and the vine. These clefts in nature's face are one of the most curious features of the country, and I regretted very much that our thermometers and aneroids were broken, so I could not tell the difference in altitude between the summit and the lowest part; by guess work I should think this one was between eight hundred and one thousand feet; at the top bleak and cold, and at the bottom close and muggy.

This canyon was well cultivated for the two hours we marched down it, when it took a sudden turn to the east, and we had to make up along a rather bad bit of road until

we reached the downs and the high road again. The canyon drains into the grand valley of the Wancheet. Yerbelo is another very fertile place, and the whole ground seems to be taken up with barley cultivation, the red, yellow and black varieties all being represented, and growing eight lines of grain on each ear. A good deal had already been harvested, and the black sheep were feeding on the stubbles.

We had come down rather in altitude since leaving Adis Amba, and our next day's journey was again slightly rising over undulating down land to Woro Eilu town. This country carries a very large population, and hundreds of hamlets are passed *en route*. I halted for a time on the rise up tc Woro Eilu, and counted the hamlets in sight, and through my binoculars made out seventy-eight distinct groups, all containing over ten houses, and some as many as two hundred. The average might be about sixty, and giving only four inhabitants to each house would account for about 17,000 people. The country is composed of deep, black soil. very fertile and highly cultivated, and what is not under the plough is all good grass land, with many ponds and marshes, which contain water the whole year round.

The approach to the town is very curious, and is over a grass covered ridge about three quarters of a mile long, with a slight slope to east and west, until two enormous canyons with inaccessible sides are reached, the one to the east drains to the Wancheet, and that on the west to the Blue Nile. The ridge is perhaps two thirds of a mile across, and is defended by a high wooden palisade, with a ditch in front and a stone rampart behind, and the flanks of the work are also strongly defended, and have been scarped, so it is impossible to get round them. There are nothing but easily defended sheep paths for many miles to the east and west, and this is the only practicable military road on the eastern side of Abyssinia from north to south, unless a detour through the Danakil country is made. It is therefore the key of this part of the country, and to Shoa in the south. The fortifications are useless against modern artillery, but nearly impregnable against savages, and the approach over the ridge is as bare as a billiard table.

There is one strongly fortified gate that opens into a custom house, and dues are levied here on all things going north and south at the rate of ten per cent., and great piles of bars of salt are stacked here, belonging to the Government waiting for distribution. The customs officials here are

always being changed, and it is said they become very rich in a very short time, bribery and corruption being rampant, and the only way they are found out is by sending test caravans, and seeing whether the duty is levied on them correctly, and as a test caravan very often becomes known, the duty on them is found to be levied exactly, and other means have to be employed to find out where the leakage is taking place.

Woro Eilu is a straggling town covering some four or five miles in length, and may be called a series of villages divided by village greens. The houses vary in size and shape, and all sorts of Abyssinian architecture are to be found, from the stone house, the composite one, and the mud hovel. There are several decent churches, and one of a rectangular shape, with curved ends and three crosses on the roof, is the only one of its sort that I have seen in the country.

I had a battle royal with Hailou as he tried to make me camp where he wanted, and not where the head of the town told me to. He tried to pull down my tent so I was obliged to shake him, and I rather think I made his teeth rattle, as he got very frightened and very angry because his soldiers and the by-standers laughed, so he ended up by himself beating the smallest of his soldiers. I wanted to make a longer stay than usual here, as I wanted to make inquiries about the Italian prisoners, and see if I could get into communication with some of the Italian officers, so I asked permission of the head man to stay until the next afternoon, making the excuse I wanted to buy things in the market that was to be held the next day.

The head man of the place, who is acting in the absence of Betwedet Aznaafea, the Prime Minister of Abyssinia who is at Adese-Ababa, while King Menelek is making peace with the Italian delegates, is a very big personage in his way, and I found him a charming well informed person and had a long talk to him. He was very badly wounded at the battle of Adowa and had still three bullets in him; two I could feel very well and the third was too far in the shoulder to be certain of its exact position. I strongly advised him to go to the Russian Red Cross Society at Adese-Ababa and have them out as soon as the Betwedet came back. He told me that while he was wounded on the field of battle, a Shoan soldier, thinking he was dead, tried to mutilate him; this is not recognised amongst themselves as a brave action, as it is supposed that the man that takes the trophy should do so

after having killed his adversary in fair fight; his men luckily came up and caught the Shoan, who was well beaten and put in chains. The choum informed me that the better class of people in the country had entirely abandoned this custom, and it is now only practised by the lowest and most degraded of the people who are generally cowards and follow the fighting, and then boast of the number of the people they have killed.

I managed to have a talk to several of the Italian prisoners and to two officers, Lieutenants Scala and Gambi, but as we were watched very closely, and it was only gratifying an idle curiosity, and I might have got them into trouble, I thought they might like more to write letters to their friends, so I told them I would send my Abyssinian servant with paper and pencils, and if they sent me their letters I would see that they were handed over to the Italian agent, who took the post from Adese-Ababa to the coast. I found they were hard up, no money and their food rations were poor, and I do not think there was one of them that did not envy the lot of the men with Dedjatch Imma. I gave the officers everything I could spare in the way of cash, and sent them sheep, chickens, honey and other little things that I could perhaps ill afford to part with including handkerchiefs. I pitied them, and I only hope it is never the lot of Englishmen to be prisoners of war in Abyssinia. These people were not badly treated, but being in rags and dependent on food from natives must be a sad experience. I managed to get a large bundle of letters from them without its being known, and I am happy to say I afterwards heard that they reached their destination in safety, so I was instrumental in getting the first news of their being alive and in safety to their families.

I here lost the mule that Ras Woly so kindly sent me as a present from the sickness. I was out of my tent at twelve o'clock at night to see the animals were all right, as the hyenas were making such a noise so close, and as the ground was so damp I was afraid of the tethering pegs drawing and the animals stampeding; it was all right then and feeding, and both it and my old riding animal greeted me with the usual whinny, their mode of asking for bread or sugar or some dainty that I used always to give them; at half past four it was dead and stiff, and the heads and necks of the three other animals that were tied to the same picketing peg, covered with froth and mucus from its mouth and nostrils.

I was terribly frightened that they would catch the disease as well, and I had them sponged clean with carbolic and warm water, but curiously enough neither of the three were any the worse.

This disease is entirely past my understanding; it cannot be infectious as the other animals would have suffered, and it kills the best and strongest animals first, leaving the weaker ones and the useless scarecrow beasts that no one would mind losing. In the stable or in the open air is just the same, and whatever the bacillus or poison is that first starts the disease, must be very potent and very speedy in its development to kill in such a short time. There is sometimes swelling of the head before death takes place but not always, and nearly always raging fever; the higher the temperature the sooner collapse takes place and the natives know of no cure for it. I have tried all sorts of things, and the only animal I have seen brought through was dosed with very strong native spirit and hot water with plenty of quinine in it, some three big teaspoonfuls to a couple of ordinary wine bottles of one of spirit to two of water. This treatment might have had no effect on the disease itself and the animal might have been one that was destined to recover. I have never heard of a case getting well when the animal has once lain down, and I have seen them fall and give one or two spasmodic kicks and then expire.

My experience is that there is not a special season for this disease, and it occurs the whole year round, but is more prevalent in the wet than in the dry, that animals that get much green food are more liable to it than grain fed animals; this might point to the germ being in the green food, and as no animals are entirely fed on grain, and there is little or no hay made in the country, there is no data to go on if animals that are fed on dry food only would get it. This horse and mule sickness is just as great a curse to the country as the lung sickness amongst the oxen and cows, the latter disease is no doubt catching while the former is not as I have had many a proof of. It will be a great day for the inhabitants of Africa when a remedy for these two diseases is discovered.

I paid a visit to the market on my way out of Woro Eilu and was soon surrounded by a jovial but dirty crowd of natives of all sorts who although curious were perfectly respectful. It was by far the best attended market I had ever seen, and Adese Ababa weekly market cannot compare in

numbers to it. What struck me most were the large piles of black wool rugs and tent materials besides the black wool overcoats and capes that are manufactured in the neighbourhood; this place may be called the Bradford of Abyssinia. Articles made of straw were also very numerous, such as hats, umbrellas, baskets of all sizes and shapes, and dish covers. The cattle market was also largely stocked, and sheep were very cheap, ranging from about 6d. to 2s. per head. Cows and oxen were dearer, as many buyers had come from long distances to purchase animals for ploughing work.

We only made a very short march to Crourea Bar as we left so late in the day, and then where we encamped was a good mile and a half from the high road at a village in the midst of a barley country. This country is nothing but barley, barley, barley, and short sweet down grass, and is terribly uninteresting and treeless. Our next day's march was also a short one, through the same sort of scenery, but here we change from a black soil to a red one, and the district is called Kei Afer (meaning red earth). The weather was bitter cold, and I did nearly the whole of the road on foot my old mount being led as I could not allow her the liberty she enjoyed from Yejju to Woro Eilu as I had been riding Ras Woly's present and allowing her to run free; she follows me like a dog, and used to run ahead of me and graze, and then when I passed follow on, again run ahead and repeat the performance. She is a most amusing little beast and a great thief, entering my tent and stealing bread or whatever she can find. On one occasion at Macalle she opened the loaf sugar box, and I should not like to say how much she ate before I saw her tail sticking out of the tent, and I knew she was up to mischief. The syce, Hadgi Ali and I are the only people she will allow to go near her, and the syce always keeps her beautifully clean, and the bits, buckles and stirrups very bright, and tells all the Abyssinians they are of solid silver. I do not know what I should do if she died as I never could get another so tame and so amusing. She has a trick however of shying at anything like a hare or a bird getting up just under her nose, but she will allow me to shoot off her back. She jumps like a goat, and canters, trots and gallops very well even with my weight on her back, and nothing can touch her with my feather weight syce riding her.

The country, after leaving Kei Afer, looks to the south one rolling prairie with a back ground of high mountains,

and it was a great surprise to me seeing how soon the scenery alters, and perhaps one of the most stupendous rifts that is to be found in all Abyssinia is come to. One of the waves of the rolling land is reached, and without any warning a precipice is reached and a new country altogether comes in sight; this is the superb valley of the Wancheet, the river running at a depth of certainly over 3000 feet. We turned away from the main road along the top of the precipice down a well-used but very rough road to the village of Avarn situated on the upper ledge of all of the canyon about 300 feet lower than the downs which we had just left, and the cliffs rising nearly perpendicularly from the level that the village is situated on. The contrast from the bleak downs is wonderful; here the vegetation is lovely and most luxuriant, great trees covering the different steps in the valley and getting larger in size the more the warmer climate at the lower slopes is reached. A lovely panorama of mountain cliff and boulder is laid out beneath one embracing all sorts of different kinds of rock, and here for the first time in Abyssinia the columnar basalt is one of the marked features of the landscape, not to be lost again until the descent into Adese Ababa is reached.

The Wancheet river also adds its waters to the beauty of the scene. In its upper reaches it is a brawling, rushing, broken highland stream with small cascades and rippling shallows dividing the pools, it then flows dark, deep and oily through a narrow gorge with perpendicular banks, and the further it proceeds down the valley the larger the volume of water becomes, as it is added to by rills and brooks coming from the neighbouring highlands that form in their upper parts graceful and feathery waterfalls. The river then broadens out into long stretches of smooth water with grass and arable fields on each side, that during high flood are inundated and receive a plentiful deposit of mud which annually renews their fertility, and they do not require manuring. The shelving banks are covered with large reeds growing to over twenty feet in height, their thick stems being used to build the walls and roofs of the houses, and when the sides of the houses are well plastered with clay and the roofs neatly thatched they are cool in summer and warm during the cold season. Here the inhabitants have well-built and commodious villages surrounded by trees of all sorts, and thick euphorbia and thorn hedges to keep out the leopards who find their homes in the numerous caves formed by the fallen masses of basalt columns.

The view from Avarn embraces not only the valley of the Wancheet but what may be termed the peninsula of Devvo, situated between this river and the Adabai, which contains one of the famous Amba prisons of the country. Amba Coloth is the largest one that I have hitherto seen, and is fully seven miles in circumference and contains several villages with plenty of trees, water and cultivation, and has only two fortified paths to its summit, approached through doorways and a fort. Nature has scarped its sides and it is unclimbable, and is therefore a safe place to detain prisoners who have plenty of room to walk about. The panorama of the high mountains above the Adabai where the province of Shoa commences shuts out the entire view to the south. A flat tableland some miles to the south-south-west runs out into the valley on which is the village of Nevat with its church surrounded by immense trees.

It was quite pleasant getting warm again, as we had all suffered from the cold on the downs, and at night-time my fingers used to be so cold that it was with difficulty I could close the fastenings of the tent. Just before sunset I was sitting outside my tent in a barley stubble, and was greatly pleased to see a large troop of nearly three hundred of the Gelada monkey. I had seen a few of them in the distance before in the Wollo country but never before so close; they came within forty yards and seemed to care little for my presence and occupied themselves by systematically gleaning the field, picking up even single grains between their fingers and thumbs, and keeping up a low chattering, evidently a note of contentment. Monkeys are amusing things to watch at all times, and I was sorry to see them make off in a great hurry at the warning cry of one of their sentries, who had evidently seen a leopard, as they all made off to the high trees about three hundred yards away, and not to the nearly inaccessible cliffs which were just as close, where they always sleep at night and where even the leopard cannot get at them.

The inhabitants of this part of the country dare not leave any animals out after sunset, and all our mules and the few sheep we had with us were placed within the big fence that surrounded the village. I saw here the skin of a leopard that had been strangled in a snare; we heard these animals at night quite close, but the fire I had outside my tent kept them away.

Nevat, where we encamped next day, is fully ten miles

from Avarn, as the road winds about and two detours have to be made to get round the valleys that run into the downs. The vegetation was lovely, plenty of new flowers that I had not noticed before, and many of the trees such as the Wanza and the mimosa were in full bloom, scenting the air with their perfume. The scenery was glorious and the lights and shades of the fleecy white clouds in the blue sky made the varied landscape look more charming. We encamped at Nevat on a green just outside of the very old church of Tevelat Mariam with its enormous grove of trees. This church is perhaps one of the most ancient round buildings in Abyssinia, and miraculous properties are attributed to the soil in the grove, and it is taken away by visitors from all parts of the country. It is supposed to be a cure for many diseases and a specific against barrenness. I believe there is a little sulphur in the soil, as there is an evil-smelling spring in the enclosure which is not a drain.

From Tevelat Mariam church, the one of Aboona Gabra Mariam at Avarn stands up in the distance against the sky line, and also the church of Festa Gorgis in a large grove of juniper trees on the other side of the Wancheet valley is also to be seen; part of the cure is a walk to Festa Gorgis and back, fully ten miles by the road, and the stream which is over a hundred yards broad and about four feet deep at the ford, has to be crossed; this entails a wash, and doubtless the walk and getting clean has something to do with the patient getting better.

More monkeys here to watch; several of the males a good four feet six inches in height with big dark manes nearly black were splendid animals, and quite decent in appearance as they were entirely clothed and had no red seat to sit down on.

The direct road from Woro Eilu runs in from the downs about two miles further south of Nevat, and the town can easily be reached in a day and a half's march, whereas we have been four nights en route owing to Hailou getting dollars from the Choums instead of food. The road descends from Nevat by zigzags into the valley, and at one narrow part of the road a natural fort which has been slightly added to by man, is formed out of the columnar basalt; this commands two of the zigzags for about a mile, and as this is the only road to the south an enemy must pass it, and a garrison plentifully supplied with provisions and ammunition might hold out for ever. In this enormous cave is a large spring

of beautifully cold water, and the mouth of the cave for about two thirds of its height is closed by a line of basalt columns.

The river of course varies in size according to the time of year, and sometimes by flood mark must be four to five hundred yards across; when we passed it was only about one hundred and fifty yards and about four feet deep, and the big Italian mule carried me across fairly dry. At the end of the ford is a deep and long pool full of crocodiles that often levy toll on passers by, and it is not safe to cross alone, parties of people generally going together and keeping up a great splashing. The river for weeks together, in the rainy season, is a bar to all travelling north and south.

On looking up to the downs to the north the grandeur of this great rift is fully seen, with its wonderful geological formation of so many different sorts of rock, and the line of columnar basalt can be traced for miles. A geologist might make a splendid section of this part of the world's strata, but unfortunately I cannot tell what the rocks are, however, basalt, limestone, sandstone, granite and others are seen in separate layers, and lowest of all seems a reddish yellow sandstone over the water-worn boulders of the beach of the river's bed, that contains fossils. About twenty feet up a perpendicular cliff there are the remains of some extinct animal of a lizard or crocodile form, about six feet in length, with a rather humped back and a well developed oval top to its skull.

I should much like to have spent some time here but the growling of thunder and dark heavy clouds to the east made me push on up hill to better camping ground, and at last we halted at King Menelek's house and stables at Devvo, situated about three miles east of Amba Coloth. This establishment is what might be called a rest house, as it is only used when the king and queen are travelling; but they have had sometimes to remain for several days to allow either the Wancheet or Adabai rivers to go down, before they could ford. The buildings are wretched things and are in a bad state of repair, and their guardians live at a village about a mile away and some five hundred feet higher level, as the place has the reputation of being feverish.

I had hardly got into camp when I was told that Dedjatch Waldea, the governor of the country between Woro Eilu and the Wancheet was expected from Adese Ababa, and by the time the tent was up he appeared in

sight some three miles off on the road up the valley. Schimper knowing him went off to meet him, he pitched camp within a couple of hundred yards of us and I then paid my visit. Abyssinian grandees do not take long arranging their camp, as they have so many servants and soldiers. His tent was a very large bell-shaped one made out of the very soft native cotton cloth, and as they soon get wet through they often pitch another smaller one inside, under which they manage to keep pretty dry. Considering the lot of campaigning they do and that the majority of their lives are spent in travelling, they are very primitive in their temporary shelters they put up.

Dedjatch Waldea was a man about sixty, and seemed from what I saw of him an intelligent and shrewd person. He told me that the terms of peace between Abyssinia and Italy had already been settled, but the Italian envoy had left for further instructions, and that until the terms had been accepted by Italy that none of the prisoners would be released. He also said that the king had been expecting me for a long time, so I told him why it was that we had been detained and the cause of it. He gave Hailou a talking-to, but as he was out of his district he could do nothing, and told me to tell Betwedet Azanafeea, who was only a day's march behind him, who was also returning from Adese-Ababa now, that his services were not required.

The Dedjatch had been detained two days on the further side of the Adabai by the river being too high to cross, owing to the storms we had seen to the eastwards, and there his wife had got fever. He asked me for quinine for her, and I suggested I should see her first, partly from curiosity and partly that I do not like giving medicine away without my seeing the person, and I was introduced to a very pretty girl about twenty, evidently his last acquisition, and I found her suffering from a strong attack of fever brought on most likely from encamping on the banks of the Adabai, this nearly tropical and low valley being a notedly unhealthy spot. I gave her some of the last of my pills and a dose of quinine in honey, and the next morning the fever had left her. The Dedjatch being greatly pleased sent me a gift of food and a couple of sheep.

He was the last of the higher officials that I saw in the country before arriving at Adese-Ababa, and I must say that some of these higher officials in Abyssinia are perfect gentlemen, capable of doing good work and reaching a very high

state of civilisation, if they only had a good example set them. The wonder to me is that they are as good as they are, considering they have always been surrounded by the corrupt and brutal Egyptian official and have always lived in troublous times with different rulers of the country intriguing against one another and intrigues also amongst the lower officials everlastingly being carried on.

Schimper left early in the morning to go on to the Adabai to get all our things washed, as the warmth in this nearly tropical valley would enable us to dry things quickly, and the journey in front of us was over just the same bitter cold downs as to Avarn, where washing was of course to be done, but it was nearly an impossibility to get things dried. For sanitary reasons it is most necessary always to wear clean clothes in this country, as personal vermin are so plentiful; and the greatest care has to be used, and all clothes should be inspected as often as possible. Schimper is a very cleanly person. I followed on after having a long conversation with Dedjatch Waldea, who would not allow Hailou to sit in the same tent with him. It is curious what a mutual dislike for one another there is between the Tigréan and the Amharan, but to my mind the former is by far the better man of the two, and the women of the north are also by far better-looking and more intelligent than those of the south.

The country that we passed through from the Wancheet to the Adabai is very rich and fertile. Being a well-watered valley with a ridge dividing it from the latter river, all its drainage goes to the Wancheet, but the villagers live a long way from the road, that runs due south, as there are too many soldiers passing to make farming remunerative, and what fields there are have very thick thorn hedges round them so as to prevent trespassers. There is a good drop down to the Adabai ford, which is approached by a gorge where the Italian prisoners had been hard at work blasting the rock and improving the road.

The lower part of the Adabai valley at the ford is fully three quarters of a mile broad, and, when we crossed, the river was about one hundred and twenty yards in width and about four feet six inches deep. The smaller mules and the donkeys had to swim, and the current was so strong that it was quite impossible to cross in a straight line, and it had to be done diagonally; the ford being shallow for fully two hundred yards in length, and then runs into a very deep dark pool full of crocodiles, that are always on the look-out for some

animal being carried down stream. One of the sheep given me by the Dedjatch, Schimper reported having been taken. We could see by the last flood marks, that were about four feet higher, that the river then was fully four hundred yards wide and the ford then unsafe. The rubbish brought down in high flood was fully thirty feet above us, and then the Adabai must here be a magnificent stream of fully seven hundred yards in breadth, carrying an enormous volume of water to the Blue Nile. Some four or five miles further to the east, it is joined by another big river, called the Mofa Woha; this also runs down one of the enormous canyons like the Wancheet but not of such a stupendous size.

We bathed in a shallow pool formed by a shingle bank that projected out in the river, and washed our clothes, and got to the end of our "shipti"; and I found the only stock of soap for washing my hands and face was a small piece weighing about an ounce, Schimper having a bit about the same size. Our clothes were slightly the worse for wear, but I still had some decent garments left, but not quite what I should like to be seen in London with. However, I was what might be called decently respectable after the hardships I had gone through, and still possessed several clean and starched collars that had been washed at Asmara, which I was keeping for Adese-Ababa.

The river at the environs of the ford is very deep, there being very deep pools above and below, and many immense isolated, water-worn rocks that have taken grotesque shapes; about two miles lower down the river broadens out, and was fringed with immense reed beds, the home of the hippopotamus, lion, crocodile and water buck; we turned down a path beside the river, instead of taking the good road to the south, and entered the reed bed, through which we floundered for about a mile, the soil being dark black mud. It was terribly hot, and although the tops of the reeds, that were here between twenty and thirty feet in height, were just moved by a slight breeze, it did not penetrate below, and mosquitos were in swarms. We had on several occasions to stop, and my compass came in useful to tell us which way we were going, as we could see nothing ahead or on either side, and the escort had to use their swords to cut down the reeds, so as to allow the laden mules to pass through. The spoor of the hippopotamus was everywhere, and we heard some of them that we had disturbed breaking through the undergrowth on their way to the river; at last the reeds grew thinner, and we

found ourselves against a mighty thorn hedge, protecting a field of sugar-cane, which we had to skirt along before we could reach higher ground, and strike a footpath leading to the heights above.

The vegetation was most interesting, first the tropical reeds, then the sugar cane and bananas, followed by cotton fields, with the pods with their snow white contents ripe on the lower branches, and the top twigs still bearing flowers of many colours; dhurra followed the cotton, and this was succeeded by maize, linseed and other semi tropical Abyssinian grains, and after another stiff climb up an execrable path, we opened out on to the wheat and barley land, and came across a flock of guinea fowls, birds we had not seen since the Samra river in the north. Schimper managed to bag a brace with one shot which disconcerted our escort, as they had visions of robbers, and although we had been passing through cultivation nearly the whole way from the river, we had not seen a living being, and the villages were small specks on the hills far away, a sure sign that the lower country was feverish and unhealthy the moment the sun goes down.

On turning round on getting to the wheat land, and looking below, we could see that the reed bed was a sort of delta formed by marshy land into which the drainage of the Arrish valley came out; to the west the Adabai valley was spread out in front of us, the valley widening very considerably, and its lower parts being covered with thick jungle growth and reeds, and the upper parts of the basin alone being cultivated. There is evidently fair sport to be obtained in this valley, and lions still exist as we saw the spoor of two on our way up, but it must be terribly unhealthy and the shooting very difficult in the nearly impenetrable vegetation along the river's banks.

On reaching the highland I quite understood why Hailou had brought us this way, as through my glasses I could see that the further side of the valley only possessed one village, and that a small one already occupied by Betwedet Azanafeea and his followers; he evidently did not wish me to meet him, and there was no food, or no dollars to be got on that side of the valley. We halted at the very pretty village of Arrish, a well watered and fertile spot with lovely trees and seemingly with a well-to-do population. Arrish is only, as the crow flies, a short three miles from the main road, but to get to it a long detour has to be made, and it must be at least ten miles round.

We could see through the glasses everything that was passing, owing to the clearness of the atmosphere, and we could distinctly make out a large party of Italian prisoners, making the road along the face of the opposite cliff, and up the pass leading to the province of Shoa. I was disturbed while watching the scenery by Hadgi-Ali telling me there was a woman who could talk Arabic, and should I like to speak to her; as my baggage had not arrived I went to see her and found that she was a middle-aged lady, the Choum's sister who had been in the north, and she spoke Arabic fairly well. Hailou finding as he thought the Choum was away, had gone to the next settlement to see the "chicka" the minor official. On sitting down inside the house I found the usual tanned ox skin covering of the seat was warm, and I could see a silver mounted sword and shield in a corner, so I knew the Choum had returned from the Betwedet's and was not away, but hiding; grasping the situation at once, I told the woman that I would pay for any provisions I wanted, and that it was quite immaterial to me if the escort were fed or not, as the chief had plenty of money to pay for things; she went for her brother who turned out to be a most intelligent man, he also had been in the north and could speak a little Arabic, and he immediately told me his grievances, which were, that he had to help to feed the Italian prisoners, for which he did not get paid, and he wished them back in their country; he had had to find food for Dejatch Waldea, now for the Betwedet, and here we had arrived and wanted further supplies.

Menelek's taxation was ten per cent, an easy tax enough to pay, but what taxation did the constant supply of food to strangers mean? In times like the present, the people had hardly enough for themselves, and chickens, eggs, milk and sheep were nearly finished, and were it not for some crop always being ripe, they would have to starve nearly. I was very sorry for them, and as far as the yeomanry and better class of peasantry are concerned, I have no hesitation in saying, that they would only be too glad to get rid of king and soldiery, as long as they were sure that they would be properly governed by a foreigner, and here was another example of what is taking place daily, throughout the length and breadth of the land wherever people are travelling on government service.

I was glad to say that Hailou had to buy things and got nothing gratis, and he blamed me for telling the Choum not

to give him anything, and I remarked how much better off we all should have been if we had come along a nice high road instead of by a monkey path, and have associated with one of the highest officials of the land on the other side of the valley. I believe that I have had quite a unique experience on this voyage, and have really seen a good many of the sides of the Abyssinian question, that a good many travellers have not had the chance of seeing, and I am certain if the Italians in the north will only keep on friendly relations with the lower classes, it will not take long before they can ignore the higher, who will be powerless to do them any harm, the moment the peasantry, who are no doubt the back bone of the country, see that they can live safely under the foreigner.

However suitable a despotic monarchy may be for some countries, I do not think it is popular or will last much longer here, and one revolution will clear the atmosphere greatly, and then the position of the people will improve. Events and changes in Africa are more rapid perhaps than on any other continent, and the crisis in this country may occur quicker than people imagine, and those that are interested in the country should be prepared for it. I could write a great deal on this subject, but perhaps it might get to a quarter which I should not like it to, so I had better be silent, however there is no use ignoring that the change may rest on the life of a single man, and Abyssinia is a country where people very seldom die in their beds.

CHAPTER XVIII

SHOA

THE route next day was round the head of the valley to the high road, just before it rises in zigzags up the mighty wall of rock that forms the southern borders of Shoa, and here I came across the gang of Italian prisoners that were constructing the new road, a fairly wide and level one with the boulders and rocks blasted away, and the debris built up as a low wall on the precipice side. Culverts were being roughly made, and if the road is kept in repair it will answer every purpose; the attempts at small bridges over the small water courses were made of trunks of thick trees placed alongside each other, and then covered with big stones, interstices being filled in with smaller ones, so that the water could find its way through; not a bad bridge as long as the timbers keep sound, and are not eaten by white ants, but if they gave way while anyone was crossing, a fall of many feet would certainly take place, and in some places perhaps many hundred feet into the valley below.

The Italian soldiers were not looking so bad as I expected, but some of them were in rags, while others had been able to procure some clothes from Adese Ababa, where an enterprising Greek had brought from the coast as many garments as he could secure and given them to the prisoners, simply taking their receipt, and trusting to the generosity of the Italian Government to repay him. In this instance he made a good speculation, as he was the means of giving the wretched prisoners something to cover themselves with, and the Government were thankful to him for doing so; I wonder if ours would be the same, and if the Treasury would pay up, most likely not, as they never had a precedent for doing so, and it would not be their business that our soldiers were in misery in a foreign country.

I had a long talk to a good many of the prisoners, and they were as well treated as they could expect to be, and the small wage they earned for making the roads, allowed

them to add to the rations that were served out to them by orders of the king. Several of them, however, had been beaten by the man in charge, and a couple of days before I arrived they had retaliated, and were now being left alone to go on with their work without interference. The road after the zigzag is got over runs along for a couple of miles on the level with a precipice on one side, and a steep irregular rocky wall on the other from two hundred and fifty to five hundred feet in height, till at last a gorge is reached, up which the road leads, (this pass and road is called the Gobella Dagat), and after another mile the top of the Shoan plateau is come to, where I sat down and looked at the splendid view stretched out in front in me.

To the north the whole of the mountains of the Wollo country with their enormous wind-swept heights, must have been several thousand feet higher than the point I was resting at, which seemed the highest in the neighbourhood, the Woro Eilu district was plainly visible, and the upper bank of the giant Wancheet rift, and the old church of Nevat was a mere speck, then the outline of Menelek's state prison above Devvo, and then the high line of country above the Adabai and the valley of Arrish. On the east another huge canyon brought the river Mofa Woha from the north-east, its course being distinctly traced for many miles, until it joined the Adabai some three miles off the place I was resting at.

A break in the eastern backbone ridge of the Abyssinian mountains that run north and south gave a far off glimpse of the sweltering Danakil country, and then the mountains abruptly rose again and continued in a broken and irregular line of heights to Ankobar, the old capital of Shoa, now a place of only second rate importance. The Beressa river flowed at my feet from the south-east in a minor canyon, and joined the Adabai nearly opposite to the junction of the Mofa Woha with the same river, and the whole panorama of water, mountain rock and fell with broad tracts of cultivation, made a splendid picture, its beauty heightened by the lights and shades thrown from a partly overcast sky with fleecy white clouds standing out against the deep blue vault of the heavens above. The whole scene was immense in its grandeur and beautiful in the extreme, and embraced every sort of climate and vegetation. By simply facing round the view to the south-west was totally different, rolling downs with very little to break the monotony of the landscape, and hardly a tree to be seen

except round some isolated church or hamlet, and barley fields following barley fields till all traces of their dividing turf walls were lost in the further distance.

A rich land and capable of being made a happy one, an industrious and docile population held down by a despotic power, with no chance of improving their position, and never knowing whether they will ever enjoy the fruits of their labour, the capabilities of this country are very great, and under a good government, with the security that it would bring, the people would soon improve their position.

There is no need to be told what the population consists of, and who are the ruling race, as the buildings in the villages show that, the fairly comfortable and large establishments of the Christian Amharans being close to the squalid wretched cabins of the Mahomedan Shoans, who do all the work and pay the majority of the taxation. The Christian goes about with his escort of armed servants, who all wear good but dirty clothes, while the Mahomedan has only a dirty pair of cotton drawers and a shirt, with an untanned sheep skin or woollen cloak over his shoulders, and instead of carrying a rifle or a sword, has only some hoe or iron shodded stick used for agricultural purposes. I thought what a good thing it would be for the country, and whether a day is not far distant when the agricultural instrument will be the only one seen, and how easy it would be to govern these people, as their great aim in life seems to be to lead a quiet life and enjoy the results of their labour, practise their own religion, and when rich enough to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and then to return and die in peace in their own country.

Here I saw two different people held in bondage as an Italian officer, Lieutenant Fuso, came up with several other Italians private soldiers European and native; the latter happily having escaped mutilation like the majority of them had to undergo after the battle of Adowa. I had a long chat to the officer who was treated quite as well as could be expected, but it must have been a sad experience to work for a native ruler, his only consolation was that the road he and his compatriots were making, might prove useful to march foreign troops over on some future occasion, and that King Menelek's wish for the improvement of his roads for military purposes might be also a good thing for the invaders as well. I again here made inquiries, as I did on every opportunity that offered, and asked the Italians how they

got on with the inhabitants of the country and I was invariably informed that the peasantry went out of their way to do them little kindnesses and would give them all sorts of little things, such as milk, eggs and bread, and never dream of asking for payment in return; it was only the minor officials, belonging to the soldiery and the soldiers, that used bad language and occasionally struck them; in fact the conduct of the poorer people left nothing to be desired.

I heard a great deal after I left Abyssinia, mostly from French sources, of the bad way in which the Italians had behaved in the country and the ungentlemanly manner in which the Italian officers conducted themselves. I believe this to be one of the most cruel lies that one nation ever perpetrated against another, and that there was not a shadow of fact in the accusation. That some of the poorer of the Italian soldiers took unto themselves Abyssinian women, and wanted to stay in the country against the wish of their officers was a fact, but this I do not consider any great crime, and what poor men of any European country might have done, as they were living in a fertile country with a splendid climate, and perhaps with much better prospects of getting on, than in some squalid priest-ridden town in Italy.

I do not believe that there is a more unlovely place in the world than our East end of London, with its horrible surroundings and poverty and where many of the inhabitants do not know where to look for their next meal; certainly a man coming from there into a lovely, bright country, where all the necessaries of life are to be obtained for the least labour, cannot be blamed for wishing to better his position, and living a life free from the troubles that he has hitherto met on every side, and if he takes to himself a partner in the shape of a good-looking native wife, who will help him to gain his livelihood and look after his house for him, it is only obeying the laws of nature, and is still less worthy of blame. Several of the Italian soldiers had done so and they professed themselves as being perfectly happy, and had no wish to go back to their country, but preferred their Robinson Crusoe life with Mrs Friday, to that they had to look forward to on their return to Italy. Those that I saw were certainly doing good work in teaching the natives to better their personal surroundings, as they were living in better built houses, they had already started neat flower and vegetable gardens, and were getting together a little live stock and

certainly had already made their Mrs Friday, as far as cleanness was concerned, much better than her neighbours.

We encamped about three miles away from the top of Gobella Dogat pass, at the village of Costa Amba, the headquarters of Dedjatch Maconen, the governor of the district. It was bitter cold and the wind blew and whistled through the basalt pillars of a neighbouring cliff, making weird and uncanny noises, which joined with the cries of the hyena, made one think of spooks and other denizens of fancy, and kept both Schimper and I awake for a long time. I believe in nothing ghostly or supernatural, but Schimper and Hadgi Ali are both highly superstitious, and the one took to his Bible and the other to the Koran, and they sat up long after I went to sleep, reading their respective books by the light of one of the candles we had made *en route*. I chaffed them next morning, and thanked them for keeping the devils away from me during the night, and Schimper only replied, Ah, Mr Wylde, when I am in doubt and I think there is danger from wicked things, I do read my Bible, and do hold my crucifix, and then I am safe; all the same he was very sleepy in the morning and I took Hadgi Ali to the cliff, and he had the satisfaction of finding out that the noise really came from the wind blowing into a cavern lined with basalt pillars, a line of which projected across the face and some way past it.

The whole way from Costa Amba to above Chela lake, two marches off from Adese Ababa, is highly monotonous, over black soil, grass, marsh, bog and barley land, with hardly a tree except in some low hollow where the ground has been too damp to allow the fires that sweep over these downs to destroy them, or on some high ground with cliff sides, where the basalt rock has acted as a barrier against the annual conflagration, but even here some partly charred vegetable giant shows the cause why the country is bare of timber. All the villages are protected by a zone of uncultivated ground which is kept free from grass, so the fire wave may die out, and in them a few accacia and mimosa trees are seen, and perhaps a hedge or two of quol-quol or some prickly cactus; these latter trees generally denote the residence of a Christian.

There can be no doubt that the Mahomedans who inhabited the country formerly, were a great deal better off than they are now, as there are remains of good tombs in the cemeteries that are met with so frequently, many of the stones still bearing traces of decoration, and doubtless on

some of them inscriptions might be found, as it is far from impossible, that if these early Mahomedans had advanced to the stage of civilisation of stone carving, that they could also read and write, and left some mark in letters on the monuments that they erected over their dead. It is likely enough also, that when the wave of Mahomedan invasion swept over the greater portion of the Abyssinian highlands, that the conquerors, after they in their turn were driven back, had the majority of the monuments they erected also destroyed, in retaliation for their destruction of the churches and houses belonging to the Christians; this having taken place such a long time ago that the ruins must now be buried in debris, or perhaps under the village dust heaps, and the pick and the spade would be required to unearth them. The earliest Mahomedan and Arab ruins further north are underground, and the few inscriptions that have been found, simply relate to a well or a fountain built by such and such a person for the good of the traveller, or a resting place for the poor of the district, or some such charitable action.

The present Moslems simply live in turf houses, a full description of them has been given in another part of this book, and I can only add here, in this part of Shoa, that the dirty huts that they inhabit are not fit for a European to enter, and the few times I was by force obliged to seek shelter in them, gave me a very unfavourable opinion of the condition of the people, and there being absolutely no wood procurable, the stench and smoke from the burning "cow chips" made me glad when the violent hail and rain storms were over. On five occasions only did we procure firewood in northern Shoa, and then only in such small quantities that as soon as the dinner was cooked, the fire had to be carried on with the very poor fuel of the country, which has little or no heating properties, and it was nearly impossible to dry our clothes, and my servants sat huddled together round a small fire trying to keep warm, and their eyes watering from the pungent smoke given off from the semi-dried animal droppings; dirty was no name for the state we all got in, and we all looked more or less the colour of bad kippered herrings, smoke-dried and smelly.

After getting out of the Tuchwayn Province, part of it belonging to Queen Taitou who has a large estate at Kusei, where there is also a large government grain store fairly well fortified, the last bit of interest ceases in the scenery, and there are not even monkeys to interest one, as there is nothing

to shelter them on the downs. Near Costea Amba and Imberta they are very numerous, as they have the neighbouring canyons to live in, and their great enemy the leopard has been nearly exterminated on the Shoa side of the Adabai.

Between Imberta and Sallela I was very interested to see three large lots of these Geladas of all sizes; from the oldest of hairy patriarchs to the smallest of downy babies, on the march to their feeding grounds; they have regular roads, and the natives say that each troop always keeps to its own path. They leave their sleeping-places the moment it begins to get light, and arrive on the top of the canyon about sunrise; if there is a barley field to be gleaned close to the canyon, they proceed to that, if not, they may have to go some way before finding one; they seem to know that they will not be molested by the inhabitants of the country if they do not touch the growing grain, and they therefore keep away from the ripening crops. In this barley country there is not a month in the year during which harvesting is not going on, so it is only a question how far the monkeys have to travel to procure food; failing finding grain they diligently work the downs for roots, berries, or flower seeds, and it is only when they are driven by hunger that they raid the crops. Monkeys and Shoans seem to be on the best of terms, and it is most amusing to see the children trying to drive the monkeys off the stubbles when they are gleaning. Several of the small boys will commence pelting them with stones, and the largest of the male monkeys will commence barking and showing their teeth, and then the small boys will run back to the villages followed for a short distance by several of the old males, who will then return to their gleaning.

I had a most interesting conversation with the choum of Sallela regarding these Geladas. We were all watching a troop of about seventy on their way back to their cliffs, and they passed within a short distance of the village; the rear of the troop was brought up by a very large male, lame on one hind leg, and the choum said he could remember it for many years, ever since it was a small one, and it was lame then. I could not get him to say how many years it was ago, or I might have fixed its age, but it was over twenty, or as he said, when his boy was a baby, pointing to a young man of about that age or a little more. This would give the age of the leader of the Geladas as about twenty-five, and doubtless they live to a considerably greater one.

I should think that this kind of monkey by the shape of its skull is quite as intelligent as any of the other known species, and I do not wonder, therefore, that they get very intelligent, and know that when they are stealing the crops they are doing wrong; the number of years they live in one place and seeing the neighbouring villagers daily, they begin to distinguish those that do not molest them, and like monkeys in captivity they begin to know their master. This is no traveller's yarn that I am about to relate, but a fact, and is certainly one of the most interesting true monkey stories that I have ever come across in my many wanderings. The old choum asked me if I would like to see the old male monkey quite close, and of course I was delighted to have a chance of seeing a really wild specimen in close proximity; he thereupon commenced calling "Baba, Baba," and the old male stopped and gave evidently the word of command to the others, and they all halted. The choum then sent for a bit of bread, which he put on a stone about ten yards off from where we were sitting, and the old male came up slowly and took the bread, and sat down and commenced eating it, giving grunts of satisfaction as if he was saying thank you.

This Gelada when standing upright was over four feet eight inches in height, and had a nearly black mane, and his fur was in beautiful condition and not a bare spot about it, in fact a most decent animal, and he seemed quite as intelligent as a good many negroes. The muscular development of the arms and unbroken leg was very great, and few men would stand a chance against such a beast.

That monkey did not come into the house, or dine with the choum, nor did it do anything more than I related, but still it proved that this wild animal, after seeing the same man daily for many years, had confidence in the choum, and I was not at all surprised that the villagers believed that he kept his big family in order, and had taught them to leave the growing crops alone; namely, that there was danger in going into high and growing corn, and none if they kept in the open, or that there was danger in pulling down grain, but not in picking it up. I have often had monkey stories told me by the country people, some hardly fit for publication and others that would make black printer's ink blush; some, however, are highly amusing despite their being what some people would call very vulgar. The tales regarding animals known in Abyssinia are of a very far

Eastern character, and no doubt they must have originally started from there, and were brought into the country by those early settlers from Southern Arabia or from still further east.

Soon after leaving Sallela a part of the country is come to which seems to me to be the most uninteresting part of the whole of Abyssinia; it is the central upland of Shoa, and if I was asked what it consisted of, I should say black mud and marsh with a few bits of basalt pushed through it. I shall always remember the country round Gnua and Gadulla, and its dreary view with a glimpse of the mountains of Ankobar to the east, and that of Selali the country of Ras Dargai (King Menelek's uncle) to the west, with a ridge of mountains in front of us, over which I am told is Adese Ababa, and the end of our southern journey.

The whole of the drainage of the numerous mud ditches, mud brooks, and mud flats, all goes to the Adabai, and during the rainy season this river must carry an enormous volume of water to the Blue Nile and a very large amount of colouring matter. In any other country these water courses would be fringed with vegetation, whereas the tallest plant is some bunch of rushes perhaps five feet high. These are generally cut down by the women to make basket work with before they have reached that height, as if they get too long they get too tough and then are useless for making the waterproof utensils used for household purposes. Every pond and mud hole had a brood of goslings or young ducks, but we had only a few cartridges left so we did not kill them, besides we had a great deal of difficulty in cooking anything owing to want of firewood, and from my diary I find now both our cooks are either too ill or too lazy to cook, and it is very often ten o'clock at night before we can get the water to boil to make our coffee, and with native made bread and a boiled egg we go to bed hungry and cold.

The end of this uninteresting country finishes up with Chela Lake, a large saucer-shaped depression surrounded by ranges of small hills with a most pronounced rise to the south-south-west, over which the Adese-Ababa road runs. There is an outlet on the north-north-west that takes the waters of the lake on their way to join the Adibai, but it is a very small one. In the rainy season Chela Lake must be at least seven miles long by from two to three broad, and during the dry season shrinks to a mere puddle, so anyone

passing it during the wettest season would mark on the map a big lake, while perhaps a traveller passing in the dry season would find a pond and say what a terrible romancer the other man was.

We had a rainstorm the day before I arrived, and on the first glimpse of this duck and goose covered water, I do not think it could be more than a mile and a half in length; the afternoon and night was one incessant downpour, and the next morning it was over twice the size, and I am told that the village of Chela is an island in the height of the rains, which I can well believe. Here we had about the worst hailstorm I ever experienced, and many of the hailstones were the size of walnuts and hurt terribly where they struck; to face the storm was impossible and we all had to turn our backs to it. The barley fields were cut to pieces, and I never felt so mean in all my life, as it was bitterly cold and we got drenched. The storm passed over as quickly nearly as it came on, and then the sun came out about four o'clock, and then we had a double rainbow resting over the lake which looked very pretty, but we were all too miserable to pay much attention to the beauty of the scene, and were busy trying to find out a dry place to camp on or where the least hailstones lay on the ground. At last I saw on a ridge just above Chela village a heap of straw where the natives had been cleaning their barley, so I made my servants take my things there, and Schimper sent one of his servants to find out who it belonged to. On the owner coming, we purchased the great stack for a dollar, and we soon cleared it away and found a dry place underneath large enough for all of us to camp under, and seeing a broken down hut with a little wood about it we also purchased it for another dollar and two out of our remaining bars of salt.

We soon had a roaring fire under way, the first for many days, and we got thoroughly dry and I managed to get a warm bath, which I sadly wanted, as I had not washed for five days since crossing the Adabai, and I am sorry to say I found several insects on me of two sorts, that are not mentioned in polite society; the only wonder was that I had not more, as every one of the natives and my servants were swarming with them. Till the present moment I remember our dinner that night, and the ducks that Schimper had shot were delicious, and we managed to get some green peas from the choum's garden. The choum was at first very unfriendly and absolutely refused to give the escort and Hailou any-

thing to eat. I offered to pay for all that I wanted and he would sell nothing, as he professed to have nothing left in his house for himself and his family. His reason for not selling was, if he had sold to me that Hailou would have wanted the things for nothing. I sent to a neighbouring group of houses and got eggs, milk, chickens and honey which we were badly in want of. Hailou and his men had to go supperless, and as I saw they were all very hungry and quite tired out with our long wet day's march, the moment Hailou went to sleep I gave the soldiers two sheep I had with me, and they made a good meal, Hailou also having his share, and the next morning he was quite gracious to me and said that our troubles would soon be over, as the day after we should reach our destination and then I should see what a beautiful place Adesa-Ababa was, and what he would do for me; however, the next day we did not arrive at our destination, as we started late and the march was a great deal too long, one of the soldiers said, to do in one day.

From the place we encamped above Chela Lake the road led all up hill over a more broken country, mostly grass valleys surrounded by high hills which were worthy the name of mountains; the farms were all far away from the main road, as evidently agriculture near the highway, owing to so many soldiers going backwards and forwards, was as usual not a paying business. During the whole day's march we constantly passed batches of soldiers, some of them very civil and others the reverse; we also passed many countrymen with supplies of all sorts, and many animals laden with firewood and timber for building purposes, shewing already what a distance fuel for cooking purposes is brought to Adese-Ababa.

The last ridge of mountains was arrived at, that divides the upper Shoan highlands from the lower level round Adese-Ababa, and at last we got to the top of the Baruck pass and sat down under a sycamore fig-tree just on the southern side, and enjoyed the warm sun and the shelter from the cold north-west wind off the downs. We followed the main road down the pass to the open plains, and then finding it impossible to reach the capital till after dark, we turned off to the right to the village of Tanquillé, where Hailou ended up his journey with a final quarrel with the villagers. The choum of the village, seeing our cavalcade coming across the open land towards his home, riding away before we got there, Hailou giving chase. As the choum was riding a horse, and

Hailou was only on a mule's back, he could not overtake him and he returned in a very bad temper to find that I had pitched camp at a well built isolated farmstead, whose owner would have nothing to do with the escort, and ordered them off to the village situated about a mile away. It rained heavily in the afternoon and it was so wet that the escort did not care about coming near my tent, so we spent the last night in peace, and the owner of the farm and his family were most kind and attentive to me, and I obtained everything I required, including goat's milk for our coffee.

The cattle disease in Shoa was still very bad, and nearly all the horned cattle at Tanquille were dead, and I did not care about drinking cow's milk as it might also be bad for one, not that the natives mind, as they not only drink the milk but eat the meat of the animals suffering from lung sickness, and often cut the animals' throats to save their lives, as the Irishman said. They will not eat the flesh of an animal that dies from the disease, but they will kill them when they are absolutely at the last gasp. I hardly eat a bit of beef the whole way from Macalle till I reached Adese Ababa, and then it was from healthy animals killed for the use of the Italian prisoners.

Tanquille is a pleasant little village situated in a small inlet of the downs and nearly surrounded by hills fairly well covered with big trees of the sycamore fig, too big to cut up for firewood,and also juniper trees that are reserved for building purposes, they belonging to one of the churches in the district; being protected from the cold winds the climate is very much warmer than that met with in the immediate neighbourhood, and all the crops ripen here much quicker than in the open, and maize and dhurra can be grown that do not succeed, or are a precarious crop elsewhere. From what I could learn from this farmer he made a good deal of money out of his crops which he could sell well at Adese Ababa, but he had the same complaint to make, although he was quite near the king, of the exactions of the soldiery. I daresay many travellers on making inquiries would be satisfied with going to the first cultivated ground and asking the owner if he was robbed by the military, and he would very likely get an answer in the negative, and the man himself most likely would be a petty officer; the old saying of dog does not eat dog, is applicable to this country as well, and no military man will loot another in his own district, but an Amharan will a Tigréan, and *vice versa*, and both the Mahomedans.

Food at Tanquille was very much dearer than at any other place I had as yet visited, and eggs, chickens and butter, were in great demand owing to the number of Italian prisoners at Adese Ababa. We sat up for a long time at night, well on till the small hours of the morning, as we had a very heavy thunderstorm, and the heavy rain falling on the tent made sleep impossible, and quite near our camp place were the remains of several dead bullocks on which a number of hyenas were feeding, and their fighting and quarrelling over the half-picked bones lasted for a long time. These animals simply swarm near Adese Ababa, and as they live at some distance from the town among the rocks in the neighbouring mountains, they have some distance to go before they get food and they are therefore later in feeding than in other parts of the country. Near all the other big towns their dens are not more than an hour's distance, therefore an hour or two after sunset their cries commence, and if food is plentiful they have finished feeding by ten o'clock and the rest of the night is spent in peace. It is very curious how seldom hyenas are seen in Abyssinia, although perhaps dozens of them are heard every night. It is only when the moon is full and very bright, that their ghostly forms are seen flitting about, and it is only "new chums" that try to shoot them.

I remember when I first came to the country many years ago as a "tender foot" I was very keen on shooting them, and procured several splendid heads both of the striped and spotted, but they were dirty beasts to handle, and their smell something disgusting. I have now come to the conclusion that they are far too valuable an animal to molest, and are a great deal more useful than the majority of our home Municipal Councillors, keeping the towns and villages perfectly clean. They ought to make good animals to hunt with a pack of dogs as they would serve instead of a drag, and would always give a good run and a warm scent from the neighbourhood of the towns to their dens, but perhaps where no foxhound would care to enter. Who knows that the day may not be far distant, when Englishmen will hunt the hyena in Abyssinia with a pack of dogs. The country would be a good one to ride over, as there are plenty of watercourses, and the turf walls that surround the fields would give plenty of jumps, and the sport would be very popular with the natives, as many of them are very keen sportsmen. It would also give them a favourable impression of us, when compared to the "boulevard foreigner" who does nothing

but a little shooting: this type of European being the only one they know.

We left Tanquille after the night's rain, everything being wet and muddy, and instead of returning to the level high road that follows from the commencement of the Baruck pass over the plain to Shola, the nearest camping-ground to the east of Adese Ababa, we took a mountain path of the worst description. I kept an account of the water courses we had to cross before the settlement of Adese Ababa came in sight, and they numbered twenty-three; through these we had to flounder. These water-courses were not made use of for irrigation purposes as they would have been in other parts of the country. The day was fine to start with and then got showery, and our clean up in the morning at Tanquille before starting was in vain as in a short time we were dirtier and wetter than ever, and a bad bout of fever came on in consequence of the ducking, and shivering with fever I arrived in sight of the Ghebbi or king's palace situated on the highest isolated hill of the depression and broken ground that forms the new capital.

CHAPTER XIX

ADESE ABABA

AS far as the first sight and impression of Adese Ababa was concerned I was not struck with it, and perhaps from the point where I was stationed due north I had, with the exception of the high land round Entotto the old capital to the westwards, the best bird's-eye view of this straggling and very large settlement. What first strikes the eye and is the most conspicuous part of the whole view, is the hill on which King Menelek's large enclosure is situated; it is built at the end and on the highest part of an out-jutting lower spur of the Entotto mountains, and is nearly surrounded by lower land, and two streams always containing a plentiful supply of water come from the highlands to the north and west and join in a valley about three miles to the south-east of the Ghebbi. On the flattish spur there are several other large enclosures containing houses and gardens, that of the Aboona Theophilus being about the best. The whole district consists of more or less broken ground with small gullies that have been formed by the washing away of the soil by the quick flowing drainage from the highlands. The place cannot be called a town but a conglomeration of hamlets and huts with hardly a decent house to be seen anywhere. The whole area is nearly treeless and very disappointing and not to be compared to a great many of the northern towns.

In the centre of the depression at the foot of the Ghebbi there is lower land in which are situated the hot springs of Filua, generally with a thin cloud of steam hanging over them, and quite close to these is a small pond and a large water meadow belonging to the king; from the water meadows there is a gradual rise to large open grass downs, which continue till the surrounding mountains are reached, that are of the same description as those passed through in the Wollo country but not nearly so grand or picturesque. We could see groups of soldiers' tents dotted over the landscape belonging to the men of the numerous military leaders

of other districts, that had come to pay their respects to the king, and through my glasses I could see a constant stream of people both mounted and on foot going to and coming from the king's palace, which seemed densely crowded with a mass of specks like the smallest of ants, in fact the hill might be likened to an ant-heap with its busy workers going backwards and forwards, but these human beings we were watching might be termed a lazy lot of loafers, soldiers and sycophants, who perhaps had never done an honest day's work in their life.

Another conspicuous object was a group of very large European tents in a spacious courtyard belonging to a fairly large house over which the Red Cross Flag was flying, marking the head-quarters of the Russian Red Cross Mission who had so kindly and disinterestedly come to aid the Abyssinians and to look out after their wounded because they were, or nearly so, their co-religionists, pills and bandages marking the first footsteps of Russia in Africa, and opening, perhaps, under the cloak of charity and humanity what may become a foundation to build a right to interfere in the politics of Abyssinia and the north-east of Africa and also on our line of commerce to the east.

We continued our march down the path that led towards the Ghebbi, sending on part of our escort to the palace to ask where we were to camp, and crossed the first stream, a good sized brook in the dry season and impassable during the rains, and halted at a stone quarry where some labourers were at work blasting a white lime-stone rock, and some Arab and Indian masons were dressing stone. These men had all come from Aden and were getting much higher wages than they could procure there. They told me that they also received rations from the king, and that they were saving nearly all their pay. The blocks of stone they were dressing were intended for the construction of the king's private dwelling, and this work and the road-making were the first examples of what the present ruler is doing to improve his surroundings now that he considers himself firmly seated on the throne.

The road from the quarry led to the lower depression skirting the hill on which the Ghebbi was built, and, on one of the minor palace officials arriving, we followed it and were led to a house about a mile and a half further on than Ghebbi, situated on a ridge of high land that forms the opposite side of the depression to the king's palace. I was

delighted when I put foot in the house that had been given me as a residence, as I was completely done up with my long voyage and the hardships that I had undergone, and had a very bad attack of fever on me from getting constantly wet through. I was dirty and unshaved, with my hair very long and my riding clothes torn and stained, and my hands in a terrible state from the cold at nights and the hot sun by day, and not having any toilet soap left to clean them properly, my face where exposed and especially my nose was a sight, the skin pealing off and hanging in strips, and I looked as disreputable as possible. It was just sunset when I arrived, and the man in charge of the house did not come for some little time while I was shivering with fever in the courtyard, when he did he gave everything I could want, native bedsteads, a sofa, mats, carpets, tables and chairs, but both Schimper and I were a great deal too tired out to do much and we wanted sleep, as for the last few days, owing to the bad weather at night time, we had hardly closed our eyes. We went supperless to bed, and the last thing I remember before going off to sleep was Hailou's shrill voice disputing with the guardian, who would not allow him to enter the room where I was.

A hardly uninterrupted sleep of nearly ten hours and I awoke to find the sun up, and feeling that the fever had left me for the time, but an indescribable irritation, and I found the fleas and bugs had been having a feast and jubilation on the body of the first Englishman that had found his way to Adese-Ababa, and they had evidently appreciated the meal as I was all over bumps. There are times in one's life when a particular bath is remembered, and I shall never forget mine the morning after my arrival. I sent down for buckets of water to the nearest hot spring, about half a mile off, and when it arrived at the house it was so warm that I could hardly bear my hand in it, and I shall never forget, while I was having it, Schimper telling me that an Italian lieutenant was in the next enclosure, and he had obtained a bit of soap from him, so, on using it, I was soon fairly clean, and what with a shave and Hadgi Ali cutting my hair about as short as the bristles of a toothbrush I began to look quite decent.

We had a capital breakfast and then a lot of visitors called, mostly Italian officers, and I heard from them what they had to put up with since being taken prisoners at Adowa. They were all looking healthy and in good condition, and as they had received new clothes they were

looking neat and tidy. They were receiving letters and news at uncertain intervals, and they could send nothing away except when an Italian Government courier left, which was once in about two months, and they dare not trust anything to the Abyssinian post, as it was in the hands of French subjects. I was advised on no account to trust anything to it. King Menelek had started the post and his idea was if a stamp with a picture of his head was put upon a letter it would go to any part of the world in safety, and that no one would tamper with it *en route;* but the French subjects that look out after the postal service take the keenest interest in everything that strangers do in the country. It was supposed to leave Adese-Ababa and to come from Djibuti every fourteen days, but it all depended on the state of the roads, and the service on my arrival had not long been started. The king had had relays of messengers from Harar for several years that immediately brought him all the important news of what the Italians were doing, and the French had kept him posted up in everything from Djibuti.

Soon after my arrival I had a visit from the king's Chamberlain or Master of the Ceremonies, Gerazmatch Yusef, who came to inquire after me and to find out all about what I had been doing. He said that I had been expected a very long time ago, before peace had been arranged with the Italians, and I explained him the delay and said it was none of my fault that I had been taken to all parts of the country, and that I was very angry at the way I had been treated and not allowed to get my things from Adowa and the Italian frontier before I started. Gerazmatch Yusef talks French mast fluently and seems to be a very intelligent and superior sort of a person. In the middle of his visit I had another shivering fit, and he immediately saw how ill I was, and on leaving he said I should have everything I wanted and he would call again when I was better. I gave him my passport and letter of appointment from the *Manchester Guardian* which he asked me if he could take away with him, to which I consented, and for curiosity's sake on his departure I made one of my servants follow him to find out where he went, and it was reported to me that he had gone straight to the house of a Frenchman who had recently arrived.

When I was at Adese-Ababa, with the exception of the Red Cross Mission from Russia, there were no others in the place, if a Spanish priest from Rome could be called one;

the Italian delegate had left with an agreement that had been drawn up, and if the terms were agreed to, the Treaty of Peace would be based on them; as the Italian representative could not act without reference to Rome, he had gone to the Coast for orders. The Italian prisoners had to remain until the terms agreed upon were accepted, and there was no immediate prospect of their getting away.

While at Adese-Ababa I spent the greater part of my time with the Italian officers who were most kind to me, and General Albertone had hours upon hours conversation regarding the battle of Adowa. Of course I having seen the whole of the battle-field and knowing it so well, I could explain many things he knew little about even round his position; that battle was fought and refought over and over again, and I used to be very much amused how excited we all used to get and how the earth was dug up with sticks explaining the different episodes, and the amount of paper we spoilt in drawing plans. Schimper at the time of the fight was with General Baratieri, and neither of them saw anything of it very close and nothing of Dabormida's or General Albertone's positions, so he could not help in the argument and only looked on; he could, however, fix one point certain, that General Baratieri halted in one place for many hours, and a great deal too far off to aid anyone of those that got into action against a foe much slower even than the mobile Abyssinians. General Albertone repeatedly told me that he sent back several times to say that he had taken up his position, and asked why he was not being supported, and where the centre was, and why it did not come forward; and he never received any answer to his messages. To retreat was impossible, and if he had taken up a trifle better position about a mile in advance, he would have been equally quickly surrounded and outnumbered, and it was his opinion that they never stood a chance from the time they left their position at Entiscio, and if the whole of their force had been in touch that the end would have been the same, only they would have inflicted a heavier loss on the Abyssinians.

His artillery, in spite of having superior gunners to serve it, was inferior to the enemy's in range, and therefore stood no chance. There can be no blame attached to the Italian officers, who behaved bravely and fought till the majority of them were killed or wounded, and till defence was further impossible; as no more ammunition was left, what more could

they do, or their country expect from them? I can vouch for their bravery by the battle-field, and for them being gentlemen by their conduct after they were taken prisoners and during their stay in the country, and the wicked libels published about them by another European power reflected more on the nation that gave the false news to the world than it did to those who it was intended to injure.

The history of the campaign has never been written, and when it is it can bring no discredit on the Italian nation, although blame must be attached to individuals; there was no disgrace in being beaten by a foe that consists of such splendid fighting material as the Abyssinians, especially when they outnumbered the Italians in the ratio that they did. I have no hesitation in saying that, had English soldiers been in a like position, the result would have been the same.

It has been the fashion in England to regard the Abyssinians with a sort of contempt and to under rate them in every possible way, all I can add is, that if it is in this spirit that Englishmen undertake any campaign in future against these mountaineers, they will have a rude awakening, and will find that it is not against the Dervishes that they are fighting. I may be wrong, but I consider that the Soudan campaigns have been a bad school, as the actual fighting has been so easy, and although the foe has been a brave one they have never shown any tactics, and have always charged in the open with their spears and shields against modern arms of precision with only one result, namely, being annihilated.

How good the Abyssinians are is little understood, and now they are armed with modern rifles and modern artillery and that their tactics are admirably suited to the country they inhabit, they will prove a foe that will tax the resources of any first-class power and will necessitate large forces being kept ready, I do not say at the frontier but within easy distance of it, to protect the subjects of Abyssinia's neighbours, who cannot be allowed to live in fear of raids as they will never be able to carry on their peaceful avocations in security, and unless they do so no marked improvement can be made in the prosperity of the surrounding countries.

It is my opinion that half measures with the rulers of Abyssinia, no matter who they are, will be of little good, and they must be either friendly or unfriendly; if the former,

they will have to fall into line with Italy and England, and aid in the peaceful commercial and social development of their subjects, by giving them security which only a just government can do, and what they have not got at present; if the latter, it can only end in a war that will finally settle the question in one way or the other; the strain and insecurity of not knowing what is going to take place will keep the north-eastern portion of Africa in an unsettled state, and always prevent the carrying out of the mid-African railway and telegraph. The one, there can be no doubt, will be shortly carried out, while the other I look upon as a diplomatic luxury that can never pay without its lateral feeders being first constructed, and then the main line will never earn its working expenses by what it carries until well on in the twentieth century, whereas in a reasonable time the feeders will pay fair interest on their capital.

I have every confidence now that the importance of the Abyssinian question will not be ignored, our usual national apathy let the undoubted opportunities that we formerly had slide, until we found ourselves supplanted, and, as I said before, it is impossible for us to say how far the present ruler is bound to his present advisers and how deep the evil is rooted. I firmly believe at present that no paper ties or promises that the king has ever made would be recognised by him if they stood in the way of his interests, so it is quite possible that he would enter into further engagements, only to break them if he found they were inconvenient, and his life of intrigue that he has led makes him a match for the most able diplomatist of any nation, so it will be very difficult to corner him.

He may learn a lesson from those he is now brought into contact with, as he never before saw an English officer or a gentleman until our mission and the present English representative, and may learn that there are other types of character than those he has formerly seen and been brought into contact with. No one who has ever had any dealings with King Menelek can doubt that he has many good points, and is making an advancement and strengthening his country by adopting modern inventions, which, if used in a peaceful manner, will greatly benefit his country, but there is no assurance that they will be so. He has the reputation of being just, when his own interests are not concerned, and being less cruel than many of his predecessors, but still he could have prevented the wholesale mutilation after the

Adowa battle; in fact, there is no saying what he may do, as he is capable of turning into one of the best native potentates that Africa has ever produced, and the concluding years of his life may be marked with the greatest benefits to his subjects and humanity in general, with a peaceful succession of another equally capable man, or they may be remembered by some of the greatest of African battles, and the most terrible misery perhaps that this part of Africa has ever seen.

It is useless my giving any description of Adese-Ababa as so much has been written about it,* and it has now been visited by so many people; after I revisited it eighteen months after, I found it had grown larger and perhaps this immense straggling settlement has seen its best days, and some new place will be chosen as head-quarters, as it is now nearly impossible to procure firewood for the wants of the inhabitants, and an Abyssinian must have fuel to cook his food, as he cannot always partake of the bloody feasts that are seen at their worst at the palace and are one of the weekly features of Adese-Ababa life. As long as a large standing army at head-quarters is kept up, this settlement is shortly doomed; if the army is assembled in some other district Adese-Ababa may still be the king's residence for some time longer, but the country contains many places that have a better climate and offer more facilities for improvement than the present capital.

I do not think that Adese-Ababa contains anything of interest that has not been described in other parts of this book, and the king's palace, which is a very inferior Swiss chalet that would shelter any of the middle classes in Europe, is not to be compared to Ras Mangesha's palace at Macalle. There are few works of utility, there is no covered market, and there are no shops. The bridges over the streams are of the rudest construction, and show no engineering ability, and no decent road existed before the arrival of the Italians, although engineers have been at the king's disposal and resident with him. Water is brought into the palace by pipes, the stream utilised being tapped at a higher elevation, so it requires no pumping. The chief stores and artillery depôt are built of stone, and are of no architectural beauty, and the whole settlement seems as if it had been built in a hurry and would be left in a hurry.

* Count Gleichen's account of the Mission to King Menelek in 1887 gives an accurate account of the place.

The houses of the European residents are of better construction than those of the natives, but Abyssinian designs have been copied; the dwelling that I occupied on my first visit is now the Italian residency, and the hospitable and charming companion Captain Ciccodicola, who represents their Government, has turned the flea and bug-infested tumble-down premises into a clean and comfortable place, beautifully furnished and with great taste, and it is now quite an oasis of civilisation in the midst of squalid and semi-civilised surroundings; the Italian residency is by far the best of all the European establishments in the place, and it also gives the king an idea of what a European gentleman's house is like, and teaches him that with all his power and riches he has nothing like it.

I was warned by the Italian officers against a certain Frenchman who had travelled in a clerical garb as far as Adese-Ababa, where he had dispensed with it, and this was the man that my credentials were taken to, and he did me many unfriendly actions and tried to get me to make him my go-between with the king, who did not see me until I had written for an interview, and on our first meeting he told me that he had been informed that I had arrived so ill with fever that I could not go out. I certainly had been very ill for the first three days, but with good food and rest I soon pulled through, and it was this Frenchman that had been keeping me away from the king by telling him I was ill.

I have had many interviews with King Menelek, and on my first arrival he had no European adviser at Adese-Ababa, and was glad to see any foreigner and gain information from them. I was asked by him to publish in the *Manchester Guardian* a copy of the treaty that he had entered into with the Italians, and thanks to the enterprise of the proprietors of that paper, they were the first to give to the public full details of the agreement entered into, and a more correct account of what had been done in Abyssinia than had ever appeared before. What had been published before was all hearsay, bazaar rumours, and tittle-tattle, and certainly the proprietors of the *Manchester Guardian* can claim the credit of putting before the world the truth regarding Abyssinia, and drawing the attention of the public to this very much neglected country.

My thanks are due to them for their kindness to me, and I should not hesitate again to carry out for them a similar undertaking. I was laughed at, and was told the task that I

undertook was impossible, and I should never be heard of again if I crossed the Abyssinian frontier, as the state of the country was so disturbed. Dangers I suppose there were, but I do not believe that I did anything more than what many other Englishmen would have accomplished, as long as they treated the natives in a gentlemanly manner, and kept their temper. I have always managed to get on with natives no matter in what country I have been, and with the exception of shaking the officer in charge of me, which did him good, I never had to lay hands on a single person in the whole country.

I have also to thank King Menelek for his great kindness to me during my stay at Adese-Ababa, and during the many conversations I had with him on many subjects I found him a remarkably shrewd and clever man and very well informed on most things except on England and her resources; his information on our country evidently having been obtained from persons entirely unfriendly to us, and who did not want Englishmen to have any diplomatic or commercial transactions whatever with Abyssinia. It must be understood that at this time Menelek had not been run after by European missions, and the Fashoda conspiracy had not taken form, and the mind of the king was to a certain extent free; the conspiracy could only have commenced about three months after my departure, and it had no doubt been arranged before the arrival of the English mission under Sir Rennell Rodd, and was carried on after their departure, when England was not represented with still greater activity, and was in full train before Captain Harrington arrived, but the result of Marchand's expedition was not known nor was the success from the Abyssinian side assured.

Had the Abyssinian forces with the French leaders been at the mouth of the Sobat river when Marchand had arrived at Fashoda from the west, the French would have had a chain of posts across Africa, from their Congo possessions to Djibuti, and the friendship of King Menelek would have been doubly useful to them, and they could have waited for events in Abyssinia, obtaining first the greatest diplomatic influence, then a protectorate, and then annexation and shutting the country for ever to every one but their own subjects.

There can be no doubt that we have been expanding our possessions in Africa at a great rate, but, however, it was inevitable, and at the same time, instead of looking at our

responsibilities in a proper light and increasing our staff and armaments in a proper ratio, we have tried to do things on the cheap and, not having enough permanent officials in our home offices, have neglected our opportunities which others have been too glad to seize, and now our expansion in the north-east of Africa is not the blessing it should have been, and, where the expenditure of pence would have been sufficient, pounds will now have to be spent to enable us to win back the position we formerly held. I believe the different Governments have been fully warned by those that serve them what would take place, and they have not been listened to, and what ought to have been everyone's business of course was, as on other occasions in the east, nobody's, because the Indian and Home Departments do not agree. No matter what sacrifice we are put to, we cannot give up what we have taken in hand, as any one of the possessions that are given over may prove to be the keystone of the arch, and the whole fabric of our outer and greater Britain may come tumbling down about our ears, and ruin may stare us in the face.

We are now going through in South Africa what the Italians experienced in the commencement of their colonial enterprise, and the same faults may be attributed to both governments undertaking a business with too small means. The Italians had to give in for a pecuniary reason and not for want of men, while in our case it seems as if the men are wanted. These lessons are, no doubt, taken to heart by King Menelek, who will follow the movement of England in the south with the greatest attention, and he will see that the troops opposed to us in the south are the same material that he commands, viz., peasantry that are good shots, unhampered with heavy commissariat details, and who know the country thoroughly over which they manœuvre and who can concentrate at any given point much quicker than their adversary. With the example before him of what is now going on in the south, it will be a sure sign that he is friendly to England if he does not ask us to settle our frontier, and take advantage of our present position. Towards the sea he can do us no harm, as if he procured a seaport he would not know what to do with it nor could he hold it, but towards the Soudan we are entirely at his mercy, and he could over-run the whole of it in time with the greatest ease.

It was no idle boast of the late King Johannes when he wrote to the late Khalifa that he would come to Khartoum, and what he was capable of doing the present ruler may also

be. It is useless on my part publishing the details, as they can do no good and might do a great deal of harm. Suffice it to say, time to him is no object, while it is to us, and there can be no doubt that Khartoum will more or less always be at the mercy of the rulers of Abyssinia for many years to come.

I do not blame King Menelek for the position he has taken up with the French, as he had seen what an important place Djibuti was to him, as the French had supplied him from there, with the greatest of pleasure, with everything he wanted, and with their aid he could be independent of his other neighbours, and did not want English aid either through Zeilah or Berberah, where he had always been hampered first by Egypt and then by England, who prevented his obtaining arms and ammunition with all sorts of formalities and restrictions and sided latterly with Italy against him. The natural thing for him to do was to come to some understanding with the French mission, which was before ours in the field, and help them to pass through his territories, not for one moment thinking that the day was not far distant when England would be his near neighbour and occupy the territory aimed at by France. Whatever our English mission told him about Khartoum and what was the English intention with regard to it (we had not at the time occupied it, nor did we do so for fifteen months after), he knew very well that there was a chance of the French getting there first, and doubtless he was told by them that they would remain there always, and as they had been so kind to him on one side of his dominions they would most likely be the same on the other.

It is sincerely to be hoped that the clouds that now obscure this part of Africa will not break in a storm which may carry everything before it, and that the present ruler may see that any temporary successes that he might obtain could only be for a short time; and by now he should certainly know, or if he does not, he should be told that it is the sole aim and wish of the English public to live at peace with his subjects, and, seeing a happy population justly governed, enjoying peace and prosperity without any interference from our side with their religion, so they can also do their part in bringing about a better state of affairs than has hitherto existed in this lovely country. I have every reason to believe that the lower classes in Abyssinia are aware of this, and, if our name only stood as high with the upper classes as it does with the lower, we should have little to fear

and little to be anxious about with regard to the future of this part of Africa.

The conspiracy in Southern Africa against our rule can only have one end, no matter if it takes one year or two to accomplish, but the successes already achieved by the rebels may make the Abyssinian question harder to settle, and I shall watch with anxiety for some little time the progress of events that take place in King Menelek's dominions, knowing full well that there can be no security until a final settlement is arrived at.

The country between Adese-Ababa and the coast of the Gulf of Aden has been so often described and written about that it now seems to be one of the best known of the modern routes into Africa; when I first went over it it was a mere track winding across the highlands, and each merchant or traveller took the path that he thought best; now a telephone wire has been put up which serves as a landmark and guide to everyone, and the road has broadened out and a great many of the overhanging bushes and trees have been cut down, so it is impossible to miss the path. What struck me the second time I went along the road was that the villages were more deserted, and instead of the inhabitants flocking to the roads so that they could sell their produce to the strangers, that they had made their homes further away; this has no doubt been occasioned by the greater number of troops that have passed up and down on their way to take part in the campaigns that have been undertaken against the people of the far west, and the number of guests of the country who get free rations only going to prove the insecurity of the inhabitants and their fear of being robbed by the military, and providing free food for the visitors.

This road carries by far the largest quantity of produce that leaves or goes into the country, but still nothing has been done to facilitate the traffic; there is not a shelter or a rest-house along the whole route, and everyone has to encamp in the open. In other countries the merchants are protected and patronised, but in Abyssinia it is the reverse, and they are looked down upon. It is not more than three years ago when it was dangerous for small parties to cross the Hawash valley that divides the Harar highlands from those of Shoa, on account of the bands of wandering Arrusi Gallas that had their home in the mountains to the south of the road, but these robbers plundered some of the

king's property on its way to Adese-Ababa, and the whole of their country was conquered and annexed, and now they have settled down to peaceful avocations, and the road may now be said to be perfectly safe, and the tales of the cruelties that were formerly perpetrated only serve to frighten nervous travellers of little experience.

The whole road from Adese-Ababa to the coast is very fair going during the dry season, and there is not an awkward or dangerous bit on the whole route, and the very worst bit would be called a good road in the north and parts of Central Abyssinia ; there is no single place where transport animals have to be unladen, and the loads have to be carried for a short distance and the operation having to be performed several times in a single day's march. During the heavy rains, however, many parts of the road are deep in mud, and through the forests the going is very difficult owing to the boggy nature of the soil, and the animals have great difficulty in getting along. There is plenty of water along the whole road, with the exception of the section between the Cassim and Hawash rivers, ten hours' march for laden animals, and this might be remedied by taking the shorter route from Araki direct to the Hawash, but as no one has opened this road no one travels by it, and the merchants are very conservative, and because the present road used was less liable to attack by the Arrusis when they raided, it is still used now there is nothing to fear from them.

Perhaps the most charming parts of the whole journey are through the Cunni and Kolubie forests in the Harar province, now rapidly being destroyed by burning the giant Natal yellow pines and other trees that grow so luxuriantly in this perfect climate. The Harar province is the only place in Abyssinia where the Natal yellow pine is found, and here it grows into a veritable giant, only equalled in size of stem by the ancient sycamore fig-trees of the north. The Natal yellow pine has a red wood and smells something like cedar; in any other country but this it would be carefully preserved and made use of, as some of the trees have huge straight stems of over sixty feet in length and would make excellent timber for rough bridges, or cut up in planks it would be very useful for building purposes. The Abyssinians, however, have no tools with which they can work these large pieces of timber, so the trees are ruthlessly destroyed, and what has taken perhaps centuries to grow is reduced to a charred stump in a few hours.

The fertility of the Harar province is well known, and a big book might be written on the subject of its history and its great natural resources ; among the districts of Abyssinia that I know I place it as third, the other two that are better are Yejju and the country round Abbi-Addi, in their order as named. The late Sir Richard Burton described Harar in his book "First footsteps in Africa"; since his time it has wonderfully developed. During the Egyptian occupation of this district the conquerors built better houses than those formerly inhabited, but all their improvements were of an evanescent order, and all they did did not balance the blighting effect of their rule, and the horrible cruelties they committed on the peaceful agricultural Nola and Hargeta tribesmen. The Abyssinians that have succeeded them have not kept things in repairs, and the place is little better than a low class Egyptian town used to be before the English occupation. Ras Merconen has, with the aid of Indian and Arab workmen, built a decent house which is called the palace, and an Abyssinian church has now been added that overlooks the large Custom House Square. It is a walled town full to overflowing, and natives from all parts of the east together with Levantines are found in the bazaars, drawn here for commercial purposes. Its trade is an important one and rapidly increasing, and no doubt, when the country settles down, will be the centre of a large coffee industry, as the land is admirably suited for its cultivation and produces the coffee known in the English and foreign markets as the Mocha long-berry.

On two of the occasions that I was at Harar I have seen a good deal of the Abyssinians' most enlightened representative, Ras Merconen, who is a most courteous and polished man, far superior in every way perhaps to any of the other public men throughout the country. He is spoken of most highly by everyone, and I have to thank him for many great kindnesses and going out of his way to help me. He has the reputation of being a good diplomatist and a brave and cautious general and able to handle large numbers of troops, and also being a good and humane administrator. Being a near relation to King Menelek's he has been employed by him on every important undertaking and has now been made governor of Tigré in place of Ras Mangesha who is not in favour of the king, owing to his weak character and love of intrigue. Ras Merconen has been to Italy, and has therefore seen something of the outside world, and although

he has had to fight the Italians he seems to be on a most perfectly friendly footing with them. It is said that he rather favours them and prefers their friendship to that of France, and as he is now administering the adjacent territory to Erithrea he is away from French influence and intrigue which seems to be centred on the south rather than on the north.

There can be no doubt that if Ras Merconen succeeds to the throne, which everyone hopes he will do, he will make a good king, and there will be more chance for Europeans to settle in his country as he fully understands that Abyssinia cannot any longer be kept closed to civilisation and foreign enterprise, and he is quite shrewd enough to know that putting everything in the hands of one power can only end in disputes between the two, and it is a great deal better plan to be friendly and confer favours on all, which no doubt he will do as soon as he gets the opportunity. He has the reputation also of being more generous than the king and not nearly so avaricious, who was formerly a keen bargainer and took the best tenth in kind of all his subjects' belongings and the biggest and best of the elephants' tusks. Ras Merconen's estates also compare favourably with those of the king, and his servants are better looked after; he is a good sportsman besides, and a man who is that and a good farmer and landlord cannot be a bad sort. In person he is scrupulously clean, and is always well and neatly dressed, and dislikes the pomp and barbaric splendour with which lower class officials love to surround themselves. I have seen him on several occasions out for a walk with a single attendant—a sure sign that he is liked by the people and has no enemies, and this is what very few of their minor rulers in the country can do. He seems to be very friendly with the English, and being a well informed person he knows the value of our friendship, and if he ever lives to be king there can be no doubt that he will do everything in his power to live in harmony and strengthen the bonds of friendship with us.

I waited at Harar until Ras Merconen furnished me with a copy of the treaty entered into between Abyssinia and Italy, and I then left for the coast. During my sojourn at Harar the Italian Red Cross Mission arrived under that most charming and kind-hearted official, Captain de Martino, who knows Abyssinia so well, and was for some years Italian representative at Adowa, where he has left such a good name and reputation behind him, always helping the poor and sick and

administrating to their wants. From Captain de Martino and Dr Elise Muzetti I received every kindness—medicine, food and everything I could want. I handed over to them the budget of letters I had got the Italian prisoners to write, and I was glad that I was able to be the means of getting these unhappy people to communicate with their relations.

At Harar I got rid of my mule transport that showed the effects of their long march from Massowah ; like their master they had gone through times of rest and feasting, and fatigue and fasting, through rain, sleet and snow and over wind-swept downs, and hot tropical valleys, only two of them looked better for the journey ; the large Italian mule was in the best of condition, and its legs and hoofs as clean and good as the day of its birth, it had come over the rocks and through the mud without being shod, and its feet were perfect, showing that it is not always necessary to protect the hoofs with shoes ; being the most valuable thing I possessed, I gave it to Ras Merconen, who was delighted with it, and he still had it on my next visit to the country. My white mule that I had ridden for over eight months in the country accompanied me to the coast, and I found it a home at Aden where it still lives, with little work to do.

The friend that I gave it to rode it up to the club nearly daily, and it used to deposit him in the road when he got quite close, and then go back to her stable ; she never gave up shying, but all the time I had her she never got me off, although on two occasions we fell together ; she would follow me like a dog, and I believe in the hands of a trainer she would have learnt many tricks. If I did not speak to her in the morning and turned my back to her, she would put her head on my shoulder, and rub her nose against my cheek as if she was asking if I was angry with her ; another thing she had learnt was always to go to some stone or ant-heap, so I could get on her back without using the stirrup, and when at grass there were only three of us that could approach her, as when strangers came near, back would go her ears, and she would come open mouth at them, and it is a curious thing mules then seem to have a greater number and larger teeth than under ordinary circumstances.

At Harar my last good-byes to my kind Italian friends and to Ras Merconen were said, and I left for Gildessa where I was to procure camels for the desert route to Zeilah; leaving the highlands the weather was nice and cool, and the heat increased with every five hundred feet descent. Gildessa

with its treacherous climate and its fever-stricken surroundings, was reached the day after, and here can be seen at some seasons of the year the curious phenomenon of a stream losing itself in the sandy bed of the river—within a distance of one hundred yards all traces of it are lost, a stream about a foot in depth by about fifteen yards in breadth entirely disappearing; many of the drainages from the eastern slopes of the foot mountains do the same the moment they arrive at the foot hills, the water continues an underground course to the sea, where a break in the coral reef is a sure sign of fresh water underground. This fact is not made enough use of, as, no matter where one is in the Red Sea, a break in the coral and the presence of the "asclepiad gigantea" plant is a sure sign that fresh water can be got by digging; the ancients must have been aware of it, but the natives have now forgotten that such is the case, and another reason is, that the coast-line is generally inhabited by camel owning tribes, who perhaps do not drink water from one end of the year to another.

No incidents worth mentioning occurred on my way from Gildessa to the coast; lion and leopard were heard at night along the upper part of the road, an ostrich or two were seen and pig and many sorts of antelope, the absurd-looking gerenhuk with its camel-like neck being the commonest. I passed Monsieur Lagarde on his way up with the first big French mission that visited King Menelek, who returned covered with glory, and the title of Duke of Entotto. I was taken no notice of, and did not receive a simple "*bon jour*," and as they had monopolised the whole of the water, and would not even allow my servants to drink, I did another three hours' march, and arrived at another water well three hours on, glad to be away from their camp.

The next day I arrived at Bir Caboba, where the Italian Red Cross Mission had made a station to aid the prisoners on their return to the coast, and here I received a hearty welcome, and remained with them the whole day, they doing everything they possibly could to make me comfortable, and offering a profuse hospitality that I could not return. I left with them my shot gun and all the cartridges I had, as they were only armed with rifles and with them could not add francolin, guinea-fowl, hares, and dig-dig antelope to their menu, and the place swarmed with small game.

From Bir Caboba I made a quick march to Hensa, and from Hensa I tried to get into Zeilah in one march, a distance

of fifty miles, but got so tired with the heat that I remained at Worobot during the night and then went on at daylight to Zeilah, where I arrived very early, and was soon under the hospitable roof of the English residency, then in charge of Captain Harrington, the present representative of Her Majesty at Adese-Ababa, who I have to thank for many kindnesses that I am afraid I shall never have any chance of repaying. He has a task in front of him that will be most difficult to carry out, and I only hope that he will succeed, but failure on his part will not be his fault, as he has uphill work to perform, and perhaps a more difficult task than ever until a satisfactory settlement is come to over the South African question. I shall watch Captain Harrington's career with the greatest interest, and if he can manage to keep things quiet in the hotbed of intrigue which surrounds King Menelek he will deserve the greatest kudos. It must be the wish of everyone that knows this part of Africa that a peaceful arrangement of the many complicated and vexed points with which this question is surrounded is arrived at, and that through British and Italian influence this mighty power can be controlled and used for the benefit of mankind instead of for the aggrandizement of a few people.

Our Indian representatives in the east are so well known for their hospitality, that they hardly want my small tribute of praise to be added, and whether it is at Zeilah, Berberah or Aden, that hearty welcome is at present open to nearly all travellers that pass through. After passing many months in a wild and semi-savage country, there is no more charming feeling than to find oneself in a nice clean house with a charming, gentlemanly, well-informed host, who so well upholds the honour and glory of the old flag that floats over the building, and one cannot help feeling how much better it would be for the inhabitants of the country that one has passed through that they also could enjoy the benefits of law and order, good government and security that our flag always brings when intrusted to those gentlemen and officers that have been brought up in the Indian school, and who now represent the Greater English Government in the east.

CHAPTER XX

SHOOTING IN ABYSSINIA AND ON ITS BORDERS

IT is always a very difficult and unsatisfactory business to advise anyone where to go for a shooting expedition, and no country perhaps has changed in so short a period as Abyssinia; however, I hope after the perusal of this chapter that the sportsman may gain some information on the subject, and be able to follow in my footsteps, and pass many happy days, and enjoy himself among the lovely scenery of this interesting country which is now so little known to Englishmen. It only seems a few years ago when I remember the inhabitants having only a few flint or bad percussion firearms, with which it was a difficult job either to make a large bag or be certain of an animal much over fifty yards off. Time has altered all this, and through the Italian colony of Erithrea and the French settlement of Djibuti, especially the latter, one constant stream of firearms passes into the interior, and there is now not a single hamlet throughout the length and breadth of the land that is not furnished with many fairly modern breech-loaders.

In referring to Appendix VI., a full list of the game still to be found in the country is given; but all the animals are in sadly and ever decreasing numbers, and unless Abyssinia falls into the hands of, and hereafter becomes part and parcel of Greater Britain or Italy, and protective laws are established, it will only be in the now nearly unknown districts that big game will be found, and a sportsman able to obtain specimens of the larger antelope. At present all the edible wild beasts, big and small, are killed all the year round; the female in young, and the fawn as soon as it can walk, meet the same fate as the male, and nothing is spared. There is the only satisfaction that they are not wantonly killed, as the meat is all used, and if not eaten fresh, is dried for future consumption; but still the naturalist and lover of nature will shortly have to deplore the time when the majority of the larger

animals that once inhabited this country will be represented by specimens in the Natural History museums of Europe.

It is useless at present talking to the native about game laws, life in Abyssinia hitherto has been so precarious, and worth such a few years' purchase, that he enjoys his sport while he can, and he thinks nothing of the future, and that a time will come when there will be no game left. He is hungry, the animals are there, and if he does not shoot them, some one else will; so he justifies his action, the same as the slayer of rare wild birds in England, who argues in exactly the same manner. The only preventative being fine and imprisonment, an impossibility with the Abyssinian, but not with the Englishman.

At present in central Abyssinia, except in the thick jungle and unhealthy tropical valleys, very few of the larger antelope are met with; the defassa or water buck is now a rare animal, and the great kudoo rarer still. The klipspringer and the several sorts of oribis and duikers are about the only four-footed game met with, and then only some way off from the roads. When I first went to Abyssinia small herds, or pairs and single animals, were often met with daily, in easy shooting distance from the country paths; now one may travel miles without coming across a specimen, and when they are seen, which is generally in the early morning or late afternoon just before dark, they are so wide awake and keep so near cover that stalking is far from easy. In the thickly cultivated part of Abyssinia game, both fur and feather, is nearly non-existent, with the exception of guinea-fowl and francolins, and these are getting scarcer in places in ratio as to the cheapness of powder and shot; however, ducks of all sorts, geese of two kinds, and snipe and waders are plentiful round the lakes and along the banks of the numerous springs and rivers, as they are not eaten by the Abyssinians. I remember the time when guinea-fowl were not worth a charge of powder and shot, as the Abyssinian could not afford to waste what to him was a precious possession, to be used either against his enemy or a larger animal; since then he has more opportunities of getting supplies, and has learnt, on the several occasions when he has been pinched by hunger, owing to war or the failure of his crops, to eat many things that formerly in his prosperity he would not think of touching.

The mere boys that once scared the birds from the crops, with sling and stone, or by shouting or beating native drums and the cracking of whips, in many places have been pro-

moted to the use of the old guns that their fathers now deem beneath them, and they too wage war against the francolin and guinea-fowl, or the smaller antelope, that seek refuge in the crops of dhurra and maize or Indian corn, their favourite feeding places. What with the fathers after the larger game, and the sons after the smaller, and the travellers always on the alert for something eatable for the pot, there is a constant harrying of all sorts of game, fur and feather, and it is only in the out-of-the-way places where even small game shooting can now be enjoyed, and a good bag can be made.

The Ras, or chief of a province or a district, will, when he has the time and little or nothing to do, make an excursion to the nearest place where large game is procurable. He generally sets out with a big retinue, sometimes several hundred men, and combines very often business with pleasure, by looking up and levying tribute on some of his subjects, that for a quieter life like living as far away from head-quarters as possible. Battues are then engaged in, and the jungle for miles round is driven, or a large valley surrounded by hills is chosen, and on all the game paths leading out of it men are placed, making it impossible for the wretched animals to escape, and large bags are thereby made, often sufficient to last the party for many days. If dangerous game, such as the elephant or lion, is met with, they fall under a fusilade from many rifles, and, if present, the Ras or chief man generally taking the first shot and claiming the tusks or skin as the case may be. These hunting expeditions, as a semi-barbarous show, leave nothing to be desired, and the dancing, singing and relating their experiences of the day's chase round the camp fires in the evening, when feasting and drinking are engaged in to a late hour of the night, has a charm for these semi-civilised mountaineers. To listen to the individual deeds of prowess that have taken place, and calculating the number of the slaughtered, the bag from the accounts of those that have taken part in the day's amusement is enormous, as there are at least a dozen of them that claim to have killed the same animal. I have heard the same tale in the smoking room in England after a big day's shoot, when if what each gun claims as his share is added up, the sum total of the real bag is greatly exceeded, and leaves nothing for those that have taken part in the shoot but are not present.

These expeditions cannot be called sport in the English sense of the word, and for a sportsman they have no charm,

as the game has no chance, but still, if one considers that these hunting parties have existed from the remotest ages, and that the majority of those that take part in them have all the rudiments for making good fighting men, and are of a superior race and more capable of development than the native who is not a hunter, it seems a pity for aliens to criticise their doings or try to prevent them from enjoying themselves when they can.

The sport in the country under description dates back, we are certain, to the time of the Ptolemies, as their hunting-camp was situated in the Habab country. Their seaport was the ancient Errih, where ruins still exist just south of Aghig, the seaport for the southern Tokar district, so for many centuries this country must have been more or less wild and never much cultivated, and in these times must have carried an enormous head of game. The elephant is still found in the vicinity of the Khor Barca, but it is very scarce and only found in the rainy season.

I have very strong feelings myself on the rights of the Africans to their own game, and although I go so far as to say that if the animals are not protected they will eventually die out, the inhabitants of the soil have a better right to the game than the traveller and the globe-trotting sportsman. I believe that what has been done by the Government officials in the British Somali country, trying to prohibit the useless slaughter of game, and making a portion of the country a reserve where animals can breed in peace and are not to be disturbed, is a step in the right direction, and when Abyssinia becomes more opened up by Englishmen, that the same laws that are in force in Somaliland may be adopted in parts of the country unsuited to agriculture, and it will still be possible to get up a fair head of game. In Somaliland it is not the native who destroys the animals so much as those so-called sportsmen who go there and see how big bags they can make, and I am sorry to say kill female elephants and their young just to be able to say, "Oh yes, we got so many more elephants than such and such a party that shot over the country the year before." I have seen some of the trophies that now adorn their houses in England, and I should be ashamed to own that I killed them. The elephant, according to the accounts of the natives, does no harm except when they come near the dhurra crops, and that is very seldom, and they are generally found far away from civilisation. They may be found sometimes feeding

quite close to the herds of female camels and their young ones and never take any notice of them or disturb them in any way.

The lion and leopard are legitimate game anywhere, no matter their size or when and where they are killed, as they do so much harm to the domestic animals of the country, especially at the time when the parent animals are teaching their young to kill. I saw on one occasion twenty-three small and large cows that were killed in one afternoon by a lioness and her four cubs, which might have been from eighteen months to two years old. I followed these lions for many miles, and they got back into the Shoho country before I could catch them up, and it was impossible to proceed further. The cows killed had hardly been touched except about the neck, and their meat was sent into Massowah for sale. I got news of the kill about four hours after it took place, and immediately left to take up their tracks, but could not, unfortunately, overtake them. A few days after they killed two camels and wounded three more. This was at Ailet, thirty miles from their first kill. I sat up over the remains of one of the camels, but the lions did not return, and they again killed, a few days after, at a place a good forty miles to the north on the Lebka river.

There can be no doubt that, if a lioness teaches her cubs to kill a human being, which they do occasionally, they will turn into man-eaters at once and not wait for old age or a semi-crippling accident before they turn their attentions to men. To rid the country of these pests is doing the Somali or Abyssinian a good turn, as the lion often changes his diet from the four-footed beast to the human being, and once learning that the latter is the easiest caught and killed of all, he becomes the terror of the neighbourhood, not only carrying off the natives when they go to fetch water or while watching their flocks but boldly entering the zareebas as well.

Of all the sport in the world pig-sticking in India is supposed to be the finest, as it requires being a good horseman, combined with great nerve and dash added to coolness and skill to take part in it successfully. The male of the Abyssinian pig is a very tough customer to deal with, and when once wounded becomes dangerous ; these animals, however, are not ridden down, as their flesh is not eaten by the Walkeit huntsmen. The ground also in Abyssinia is not suited for this sport, owing to the thick bush and the animals going

to ground or getting into caves. Pig-sticking is tame sport compared to what may be got in the country, and what must be thought of the nerve, dash and pluck of the Hamran, Arab and Walkeit tribesmen, who will attack on horseback with the "white arm" only the elephant, rhinoceros, lion, buffalo and leopard. I have never had the luck, like the late Sir Samuel Baker, to see any of these animals ridden down, but I have seen the larger antelope, such as the Beisa, attacked and killed, and as an exhibition of cool daring and pluck I believe there is nothing to equal it. There are not many of these northern Abyssinians left, and the Hamrans were nearly wiped out during the Mahdi's rebellion, fighting for freedom and their old religion, so there may not be many more opportunities left of seeing what, without exception, must be the finest and most exciting sight of any that this world can produce, namely, two or three mounted men in the open tackling some immense "tusker," or riding down a rhinoceros going at full speed, and finishing off the combat with the sword.

For those who have not read the late Sir Samuel Baker's description of these hunts, I would refer them to his African publications for full particulars, but I have talked round the camp fire frequently over the sport with natives who have taken part in it, and I could listen for hours to their accounts of the adventures they have gone through, told in a modest and unassuming manner, as if it was only child's play, and not that a slip or tumble meant death, and also so unlike that of the vulgar Abyssinian soldier with his boasting, who has perhaps been one of many that has done to death some little elephant calf with a rifle volley, or perched in security with his companions in a tree or trees round a water hole, have murdered the king of beasts while taking his evening drink.

The character of the two people can readily be judged by the means they practise in their manner of sport, and although the ordinary Abyssinian and Galla is capable, under English tuition, of being made into a decent sort of fellow, he lacks that chivalry that is inherent to the majority of the Arabs, and makes the latter what they truly are, namely, fine specimens of nature's sportsmen and gentlemen.

When the Arab goes on his hunting expedition, he leaves his family and flocks behind, and sets out with some dozen mounted companions, perhaps half of them will take part in the hunting, the others will look out after the spare horses

and the baggage camels taken with them. While some are following the game, the others remain in camp and prepare the skins, and dry the meat of the animals that fall to the weapons of the swordsmen. A camp within easy reach of water is chosen, it being generally in some clump of trees in close proximity to grass for the horses, and mimosa trees for the camels, their favourite food, and these trees can easily be turned into a zareeba, so that at night the horses and camels can be protected from the prowling wild beasts that are attracted from a long distance by the smell of the drying meat. The flesh is merely cut into long strips about an inch square, and hung on the mimosa or other trees, which are soon festooned all over, it is soon thoroughly dried by the great heat of the sun, and it is then packed in mat or grass bags for transport back to their settlements. Very little of the meat goes bad, as the sun is so powerful it kills the eggs of the blow flies before they turn into maggots, and when the meat is once dry, the outside of the strips become so hard that it is impervious to fly; however, the great pest in Africa to all dried meat, also horns, hides and skins, the common bacon beetle, makes short work of it unless care is taken.

The hides of the large and thick-skinned animals are cut into pieces to be turned into shields, for which there is still a good demand, and also into long strips for making courbatches, for which there is a larger. The skins of the smaller animals are used for water skins or grain bags and are tanned roughly on the spot, with the bark of a mountain mimosa, and then on return from the hunting expedition are finished by the women, who expend very often a great deal of labour on them, and turn out excellent waterproof bags which make very good receptacles for clothes, etc., and are better and more suitable to them for loading and transport than boxes.

The way the skins are taken off the smaller animals is curious—one long incision is made from the tail to above either of the hind hocks, the two hind legs are then brought out through the opening, and the skin stripped off in one piece. The fore legs are cut off at the knees, and the head is cut off at the place where the throat is cut when the animal is killed, according to Mahomedan custom. To make the skin water-tight in case of its being required to contain water, milk or grain, it only requires the three legs being tied and one seam from the tail to the hock sewn up. The neck is used to fill the skin and when nearly full is firmly tied.

When wanted for making a raft to cross the rivers, the neck is closed and made water-tight and the inflation made through either of the fore legs. About a dozen of these skins will make a good raft and enable perishable goods to be ferried across a river without getting wet. I suppose that this method of flotation is the most ancient in the world and was practised from the earliest ages.

The native on a military or hunting expedition is not like a European requiring Berthon boats or pontoons to make bridges, for with a few inflated skins with ambatch or other light wood, which he can procure close at hand, he soon makes himself a raft. In Abyssinia, even in the height of the rains, when all the rivers are in flood, it is possible for natives to cross on rafts in many places. This is done by making detours and choosing the stretches of unbroken water where the flood runs deep, generally in the rocky gorges which are found in every Abyssinian tributary to the Blue Nile, and Atbara or Black Nile. The rivers and streams are impassable for months during the rainy season by fording, and many lives every year are lost in attempting to cross while the waters are coming down in full spate.

The outfit of the native on a hunting expedition is not very extensive. Spear, shield, sword and knife, being the only arms taken; he wears a tobe of Manchester cloth many yards long, which was once white, but soon gets nearly of the same tint as the sand or earth on which he sleeps. If the possessor of a fine fuzzy head of hair, he also goes in for the luxury of one piece of furniture, the small wooden pillow to keep his ringlets from the dirt. This pillow has not changed its shape for thousands of years, the one in present use being identically of the same pattern as those dug up in Egypt in the old burial grounds, or found with the mummies that now adorn so many of the numerous museums of the old and new world. His wooden saddle is of the same shape as it was centuries ago, and the horse's back is protected by some goat or sheep skin as of old, and between the rider and the saddle there may be an extra tobe to cover him when the early mornings are chilly. The cruel iron ring bit, by which he can throw a horse back on its haunches, the nearly oval iron stirrup, only large enough to hold the big toe, are similar to those that have been the custom for generations; fashions have not changed, nor improvements been made in this country, nor will they till the race dies out, and the best English saddle to them is not so much thought of as their

old high pommel wooden frame-work, made out of the hard accacia or hegleck tree. The saddle consists of one oval piece for the seat, joined by two flat pieces to the pommel, and is of an inverted Y shape; the whole kept together with raw hide and covered with the skin of a small antelope, sheep or goat. The stirrup, leathers, crupper and girth, are of bullock skin, and the bridle and head stall of twisted hide.

Both the commissariat and the cooking utensils are of the most meagre description, and consist of an iron or earthenware pot to boil the meat in, another perhaps to boil the grain in, which consists mostly of dhurra, or perhaps as a treat a little rice, and an iron plate to roast chupatties or cakes made from flour and water. Some dhurra, flour, and a few bags of grain are taken; a mat or two of dates, and a small skin or two of ghee, or clarified butter. This is all the food they require, their beverage is water, and sometimes at night-time and at daylight a little coffee is taken, sweetened with sugar, and failing that, with honey. Boiled meat with dhurra or rice, meat toasted over the embers or roasted on red-hot stones, and a bread made by mixing the dhurra flour into a paste and rolling the paste round a very hot stone and placing it near the embers, the internal and external heat soon cooking it through, are their most frequent dishes. Matches are very valuable and it is not often they have them; when they are absent, the flint and steel is made use of, and when they fail, fire is procured by friction; a hard dry wood being used as the spindle, worked on a softer kind which easily powders. Should suitable wood be found, which is generally the case, a very few minutes suffices to get a fire. The friction produces heat enough to ignite tinder or very dry powdered grass, from which the fire is produced. I explain this as I have often heard of people trying to get fire direct from two pieces of wood and expecting to see one of the woods flare up, whereas the spark is the only thing that these people try for, and the only thing I believe they can produce. Fires do not have to be lighted very frequently, only on changing camp, as from the time they settle in one place and the fire is once started it is never allowed to die down, large logs being employed so as to accumulate plenty of ashes which are used to prepare the skins and hides of the animals slain. If they are hunting in a country that they consider unsafe they never light a fire, as the smoke attracts the attention of their enemies, who are generally of the Danakil Shangalla and Baze tribes. The feud between these people is of long

standing, and these pagans are much feared as their weapon is the bow with poisoned arrows shot from some ambush.

The other household goods taken by the natives are a few mats, either used as a carpet or to make a shade during the heat of the day when the leaves are off the trees, or as a screen against the wind and drifting sand at night-time; a few native-made axes for felling the thorn trees, of which they make their zareebas, and plenty of native rope and string made from the fibres of the aloe or the usha plant, an asclepiad. I have forgotten to mention tobacco; this is rarely smoked, but the leaf is made into snuff, and mixed with wood ash and taken into the mouth and placed between the under lip and lower front teeth, or under the tongue. They consume prodigious quantities of this, and they claim that it drives off hunger, prevents sickness, and also acts as a stimulant. There is no doubt that tobacco drives away hunger, as I have tried it on many occasions when I have been without food, and with good results.

It is as well to mention their commissariat, as future travellers will know what to provide for these people when visiting the country. Their wants are few, and they are not as expensive to keep as a large number of coast servants; however, their food becomes a serious item if game is scarce, as they have most healthy appetites and will eat twice as much as an ordinary native. Only on one of my last visits I shot a full-grown Dorcas gazelle, a buck which must have weighed at least 50 lbs., and the five men that were with me finished it during the noonday halt, and at supper time they were ready for more.

The sword hunter's day is generally passed as follows:—some half dozen of them mounted leave their camp as soon as it gets light enough to see, watering their horses at the nearest pool or river, as the game to be followed generally takes the direction away from the water during the day-time, and it may be that the horses will have a hot day before them without being able to obtain supplies. If no large game has visited the drinking places during the night, some of the men make for the highest ground that is to be found and there look out, while the others spread out to look for any spoor. Supposing the tracks of a herd or a single elephant are found, silent signals are made for the men to assemble, and then the band follow quickly after. It may be that the jungle is thick, and slow progress only can be made, owing to the denseness of the undergrowth,

or the stony nature of the soil, which leaves no impress of the elephants passing. It may seem astonishing to many that such a large animal should leave no trace behind, no matter what the nature of the soil, but unless there has been rain or a heavy dew I have seen the traces of a whole herd vanish, and the best of trackers at fault, not being able to find a mark either on the ground or on the bushes, and entirely lose the way the game has taken, and the tracks only again found after a long cast has been made. If a herd of elephants on the move are feeding, of course they leave signs on the trees by breaking branches, but if they are suspicious of being followed, they leave off feeding, no matter what tender morsels may come in their way.

Conversation among the followers is carried on in a whisper, and their unshod horses make little or no noise in going over the ground at a walk. At last the game is sighted most likely enough in bush through which it is impossible to ride, and then a long wait has to take place until the animal or animals move off on to more open ground where an attack can be delivered with some chance of success.

In the meantime the huntsmen make their last preparations and see that everything is ready, this does not take long as their clothes consist of their tobe, which has been tightly girded round their waist, their sword, which is one of the ordinary pattern usually used by the Soudan tribesmen, and now so well known in England, has been drawn, and the scabbard either fastened out of the way on the saddle, or given to some one to hold; it has been carried hitherto either slung from the shoulder, handle forward, blade behind, and kept steady to the body by the arm, or between the bare leg and the saddle.

The men who do not make the attack, three generally being considered ample, and very often only two are employed (if more mounted men took part in the fight they would only get in each other's way and very likely cause accidents), follow some distance behind, and take charge of the water skins, shields, and spears, which are used to give, if required, the death wound to the animal. The spears are generally of the broad bladed kind, weighted at the butt with iron, and they are sometimes seen among the trophies brought from the Soudan. The shaft of the spear is much stouter than the ordinary war spear, and are from seven to eight feet long, the blade and base of the iron work being a

little more than a foot in length, by perhaps five inches in breadth. The shaft is made of the tough lateral roots of the common desert mimosa tree, which is nearly impossible to break and difficult to bend.

The moment having arrived when the quarry has moved into ground on which the swordsmen can work, a dash is made out of the bush on the unsuspecting animal, and what with the noise of the shouting of the men, with their calls on Allah, and Sheik Abdul Cader (the Moslem patron saint of the chase and the desert), and the galloping of the horses, the quarry either wheels round to see what is the matter, or at once makes off at the best pace possible. The whole affair may be over as quickly as the account of it takes to read. The first pursuing man, as soon as he gets into the required position, makes one cut at the back part of the hind leg just above the foot and makes off, the pace that the horse is going taking him in a moment out of harm's way. If the blow reaches home the elephant is hamstrung, and loses the use of the leg that is wounded; the next man following makes a dash at the other leg, and if he succeeds the poor beast comes to a standstill, unable to move, trumpeting with impotent rage, and is at the mercy of the swordsmen, who dismount and wait for the arrival of the men with the spear to put the animal to death. This is done by approaching the elephant from behind and inserting the sharp spear through the soft skin between the hind legs and thrusting it home, internal bleeding takes place and in a short time its sufferings are over.

Should, however, the first man miss his stroke, and only slightly wound the animal, and the second man do the same, then commences, if the elephant is a good-plucked one, a fight that lasts for some time; the elephant becoming the aggressor and pursuing the horsemen, their safety depending on the fleetness and activity of their mounts. Many of the horses enter into the spirit of the hunt, and are very clever in dodging round the trees and bushes, and know to a nicety how near they can go and judging how far behind the elephant is, that is following them. The elephant perhaps will come to a standstill (unless he can reach thick cover where he is safe), with his back to a thick bush or low tree, which makes it impossible for the horsemen to deliver, either mounted or on foot, the fatal disabling cut, and stands with his ears outspread and his trunk stretched out, ready to charge anything that comes near. He then has to be tempted

out of his position, which is done by one of them galloping past within a few yards, perhaps it takes several attempts before the animal is got to charge, and the last will be within a few feet of the outstretched trunk, the others are ready on either side in rear of the animal to dash at him the moment he leaves his comparative place of safety.

The disabling blow is sometimes delivered on foot, the huntsman, on getting alongside, jumping off his horse when at full speed, while the elephant is intent on following the man who has galloped past him. If on foot, the blow is made with both hands grasping the sword, one on the handle, the other on the crossbar of the hilt, with the first finger stretched out on the flat of the blade to steady it. The horse that has been dismounted gets away to a short distance, and stops until his master comes up and vaults into the saddle, and he again follows after the elephant.

These manœuvres may often have to be repeated many times before the elephant is secured, or perhaps at last gets away from his pursuers with only a nasty wound on his leg. The elephant has the advantage in the thick jungle through which he passes without difficulty, and where a horse cannot follow, in the open the fight generally ends in favour of the swordsmen. Accidents generally take place, but they do not occur frequently, owing to the foolhardiness of the hunters engaging in the combat in the dense bush, or by getting among a herd, when several may charge at the same time, especially when many females are present with their young. The accident occurs from a horse stumbling, or the rider being dismounted by being knocked off by some branch of a tree and is then trampled to death by the pursuing animal. The solitary males are the ones generally brought to bay, and the hunters rarely fail to kill them, and often, if elephants are numerous, an expedition will yield them a fair number of pairs of tusks.

"Old father two tails," as the Arab calls the elephant, is a cunning animal, and when once he has been wounded and gets away, nothing will tempt him again to leave thick cover when men and horses are following him. I have heard these hunters say that they know several enormous old "tuskers" that they can never get at or tempt out in the open and neither could their fathers or grandfathers; this is likely enough, considering the age to which the elephant lives, and his intelligence and wonderful memory are well known to every one.

It is rarely that the natives get a second chance at the same herd in the same season, as when once disturbed they go an immense distance during a single night, perhaps sixty miles or more in a bee line through a terrible country, before they halt. It is only in the dry season that these expeditions take place, as immediately after the rains the jungle becomes impenetrable, owing to the trees and bushes being in full leaf, and the grass and undergrowth springing up so as to effectually hide the game paths. The game, however, during the wet season, is more often found in the open during the daytime, as the weather is cloudy and the sun hidden for hours at a time, and they can find shade and food anywhere. The open ground is the first to dry up and long after the grass is dead there it is to be found comparatively fresh and green in the jungle, which then becomes the favourite feeding-ground.

There is another reason also why the natives cannot remain in the jungle during the rains, namely, the fly which I mention in another part of this book. The tetse exists, but equally as bad as the tetse are the seroot and horse flies, which are no doubt slightly poisonous and torment domestic animals to such an extent that they cannot feed during the daytime, and it is impossible to allow them to feed at night owing to the wild animals. Nearly all the beds of the streams and khors are full of fly, and it is only on the barren ground where they are in small numbers. The wild animals do not seem to be tormented by the fly to such an extent as the domestic ones, but the thin-skinned and short-haired antelopes still suffer and keep well away from the khors during the daytime, and graze on the higher stony ground which, during the rains, bears a crop of short herbage and sweet-smelling plants.

The sportsman who would run the risk of fever would get good sport in the low country during the height of the rains, as tracking becomes so easy and there would not be the time lost in following and losing the tracks like there is in the dry season.* The low country is not so very unhealthy during the height of the rains as it is at the commencement when the ground is being saturated, and at the end of the rains when the country is drying and the vegetation decomposing.

* He would, however, have to shoot on foot as he would lose his riding and transport animals from the fly, but he might depend on donkeys for the little work he would require in moving things, as this beast seems to suffer less than any of the others.

The huntsmen of course look upon the elephant as being the chief source of profit, and do not hunt any other animal when there is a chance of procuring ivory. Its hide is not of the best, but still makes good shields and whips. After the elephant the rhinoceros is next sought after, and he is nearly as dangerous as the former, and in spite of his unwieldy shape travels when fairly roused at a great pace, and is much swifter than the former. There is always a good market for his horns, which are turned into drinking cups, the efficacy of which as a preventative to poison there are many absurd legends about both among the Christian and Moslem population. For example, both the Abyssinians and Mahomedans believe, that if a poisoned drink is offered in a cup made of rhinoceros horn that it will split with a loud report. The poisoner would also be aware of this, and therefore if wishing to get rid of anyone it would be the last method he would adopt to carry out his end, and would not present poison in a vessel of this sort. They also believe that drinking out of a cup made of this horn strengthens the back and makes them certain of procuring children. A handle to a sword made out of the horn enables a stronger blow to be given, and will enable an enemy's guard to be broken down, and there are many more wonders to be accomplished by its use.

The rhinoceros is sometimes found asleep, and if not disturbed by the birds that are often found accompanying it is hamstrung without moving from its place of rest; otherwise it gives a good run and very often escapes to the thick bush before it is overtaken, and then gets clear away. Its hide is one of the strongest of all, and makes very tough shields, but they are of a great weight and not so handy as those of a lighter kind, which turn a sword cut or spear thrust equally as well.

The buffalo is always a dangerous animal to attack and solitary old bulls are generally left alone, as their meat is inferior, and the risk of getting a favourite horse killed not being equivalent to the value of their hide; young bulls and cows are, however, slain, as they are not so vicious and are easier killed. We may perhaps talk of this animal in the past tense, as from the last accounts from the places where it was numerous, it is said to have been exterminated by the rinderpest and not one is to be seen anywhere. It is to be hoped, however, that some few have been spared. The history of this epidemic, if ever it is written, will be a most

interesting one, as the contagion could not have spread from the domestic cattle to this particular wild animal, and as it seems to have prevailed from Cairo to Cape Town, the germs must have been spread by the wind and not by contact from one animal to another.

The giraffe is greatly prized, the hide making the finest, toughest and lightest of shields, and the meat considered the best of all the large animals. There is absolutely no danger in attacking these animals, and many of the young ones used to be captured by these hunters and sold to the European dealers at Kassala and other places, who forwarded them to Europe. This animal is still reported to exist in fairly large numbers in the neighbourhood of the Walkeit country.

The ostrich is also hunted, and many of them are killed for their feathers, which find a ready market at all the settlements; the big white plumes of the wild cock ostrich being finer and command a much higher price than those plucked from the tame birds. Their fat is also greatly esteemed, as it is supposed, when rubbed into the body, to be a good thing for rheumatism and sprains; it also sells for a high price in the native bazaars. As many as a dozen men and boys set out at a time to hunt these birds, and the boys and light-weights are generally chosen to do the driving and making the first bursts at full speed, which tire out the birds, till they at last fall an easy prey to those mounted on comparatively fresh horses that have not galloped a long distance. It is impossible to tame a full-grown wild ostrich, and those run down are always killed.

The party set out in the early morning, and on sighting the ostriches, often at a great distance, a halt is made and the arrangement of the drive decided; the chief object is to get the birds between the hills and the line of horsemen, as the birds always try to keep in the open plains; they as a rule invariably run up wind, so that they must pass close to some of the line of horsemen. The line of direction of the extension being decided on, the horsemen keep some half-mile apart, and on places being taken up, the light-weights start at a canter and approach the birds, who on sighting the horsemen commence to make off. At first the stride of the birds is short; on the pursuers getting nearer they lengthen their pace and are soon going at full speed, followed by the light-weights flogging their horses and putting them at the top of their speed. Then a second light-weight who has been keeping parallel to the line of chase, when the birds

get opposite him dashes at them and keeps them at full speed, the first pursuers easing their mounts and only keeping the chase in sight. It may be that after five or six of them have made these bursts and kept the pace at high pressure the ostriches begin to get tired; this is soon seen, and the end of the line of horsemen being on comparatively fresh animals, can drive the now thoroughly bewildered and beaten birds in any direction they choose, which is of course towards camp.

The young men and boys are generally schooled at ostriches and the larger antelopes before they attack larger game, but there is one antelope that I have seen ridden down, the beisa or oryx, that neither young nor old care much about tackling on account of its activity, and charging when hard pressed with its formidable long and sharp horns. Perhaps this beast is really more dangerous than any other animal, and although men generally escape a fatal blow when they charge, their mounts are generally killed. There are few animals that dare molest this beast, and not even the lion, unless hard pressed with hunger, cares about attacking it. The natives say that in the breeding season the males often kill each other, the one that can get his horns first home generally transfixing his adversary.

The lion is not molested by these hunters unless he becomes a nuisance, and takes to levying heavy toll on their flocks, or killing human beings. In this case all the best of the sword hunters assemble and trace him to his noonday lair, where a combat takes place that must be fit for a king to look upon, and it is certain no known sport in any other part of the globe can equal it; I went twice on these expeditions but we drew blank. My pen cannot half describe the scene, and with the exception of G. D. Giles, who as a sportsman and an artist is second to none (the details of his pictures being always correct, even geographically and botanically), I know of no painter who could put on canvas a work that would approach doing justice to the subject.

The huntsmen arm themselves with shield and spear, and shield and sword. The shield to be used to partly ward off the glancing blow of the lion's paw, and to break its force and prevent its claws from getting home when dashing past the animal at a great pace and at an angle; no shield that was ever made, or no human being that used it, could stop a direct blow or meet a blow from a

full-grown lion, so it is never ridden at direct. The noise of the approaching mounted men is enough to put the lion on the alert, and then the excitement commences; how the fight begins depends on circumstances. The lion would hardly take the initiative unless he was of a very savage disposition, or had learnt to despise men by having formerly had such easy tasks in killing them. If he declined to give battle he would try to escape by keeping to the thick bush and passing the clearings or more open ground at a quick trot or with several bounds. To attack him with the best chance of success he must be got into the open ground, or on ground that is only sparsely covered with bush, and to do so he must be thoroughly roused and excited, which the shouting of the huntsmen may fail in doing. Then the only way left is to get him wounded so that he may be made to charge, and this is done by those horsemen that are armed with the light throwing spear, dashing past the place he is hiding in and throwing their spears at him. A single spear inflicting a wound will make him mad with rage, and he then makes for his nearest enemy, who trusts to the speed of his horse to keep him out of danger. While the lion is in pursuit other horsemen gallop after him and try to cross obliquely to get a cut at the back leg or wound him by throwing a spear; if they followed in a direct line to his course and the lion suddenly stopped and turned an accident would be sure to happen, but crossing the line he is taking enables the rider to be carried by the pace his horse is going out of reach of the lion's spring. The lion in time gets thoroughly tired and perhaps has received several spear wounds; at last one of the horsemen succeeds in making a cut at the hind leg which brings the lion at the mercy of his enemies, and he is either speared or bleeds to death.

The battle is over, and the perspiring and dust-begrimed huntsmen assemble round the slain, abusing its father and mother and the whole of its kind, and what a scene of real savage warfare has taken place, and what excitement while the fight has been going on. A picture can only depict one of the scenes, perhaps the last moment of all, when the dismounted bronze-coloured horsemen with their top-knots and curly hair, many of them perhaps as naked as the day they were born, having lost their loin cloth in the fight, are standing round their fallen foe, their horses nearly beat by the efforts they have made. The location of the fight most likely has taken place in a mimosa dotted, hard brown plain,

with belts of slightly green "tabas" grass in the water ways; in the distance a range of light purple coloured hills; overhead a bright blue sky, flecked with white fleecy clouds, and all lighted up with brilliant African sunshine. It is hard to say which to admire most, the pluck of the horse or its rider. The Soudan horse is a courageous animal, and, I am sorry to say, as a rule badly treated.

Compare this to our English idea of lion killing—perhaps a momentary glimpse of the king of beasts; one shot from a modern rifle, and all over; or at the most a hit, then following up the wounded animal, a charge, a couple of shots, and the lion dead within a few yards of the shooter. Let me give another side of the picture, as there is sometimes one as well: a hit, a charge, a miss, or the lion not stopped in time—a short struggle and then a burial; the place being marked by a heap of stones, and the only mention at home a short obituary notice in the *Times*.

There are other kinds of hunters in Abyssinia and the low country of which little or nothing is known. They are looked down upon by everyone as being savages, infidels and unclean. I have seen them on several occasions, but have had little or no chance to get intimate with, or find out all about them. They shun the society of all, for the reason that no one wants to have anything to do with them. My overtures to them have always been well received, and I have found them very grateful for small kindnesses, and should have no hesitation in accompanying or trusting myself with them anywhere. I have dealt with these people fully on page 339,* so it is only required to mention their manner of hunting, which is by poison, and that all sorts of game fall to the small arrows which they employ. The ostrich is killed at nesting-time mostly, as it is watched when leaving its nest, and the hunter then makes a hole in the sand close by and there awaits its return. I have asked these hunters whether they ever wear and make use of the skin of the bird to approach the others, and they say they do not; but will arrange a dead bird on the ground in as natural a manner as possible, fastening its head and neck up with a stick, so as to act as a decoy while they lay hidden some thirty yards off.

The bow made use of is very rigid and about five feet in

* I think that these people without doubt are gipsies; darker rather in complexion than the European ones, owing to having lived the whole of their lives in the tropics. They are nearly identical to the Somalis Midjans.

length ; the arrows which I have by me are about fourteen inches long and are feathered as ours are in England, the iron points being of different patterns, and the poison smeared on thickly under the barbs which are either harpoon shaped or the iron stem roughly notched. With this insignificant weapon they can kill any animal that exists, from the smallest to the elephant, the latter succumbing in a few hours. These men follow the game by stealth or sit up in some tree and wait till it passes to deliver their fatal arrow, a most uninteresting species of sport.

The poison used is made from the boiled roots of an evergreen tree, which is found growing at an altitude of from 2000 to 5000 feet above the sea level, and is common all round the Abyssinian high lands.

The Abyssinian, besides killing game with the rifle and gun, does a little snaring ; setting nooses for the smaller antelope, the same as used by the poacher in England to catch hares and rabbits. These are generally set in the paths and runs round the cultivated fields, the small antelopes doing a great deal of damage to the young crops when they are first sprouting. Guinea-fowl and francolin are likewise caught in hair snares placed on the ground, and are brought alive for sale to the Europeans, to Asmara and Massowah in the colony of Erithrea.

The hyena and jackal are not trapped as in the Soudan, as the Abyssinian houses all his cattle at night-time, and these scavengers are very useful, eating the bodies of all dead animals that the people are too lazy to bury. During the last big cattle epidemic these animals had more than they could eat, and in many places the whole air was tainted, and the germs of the disease were spread. Had they immediately buried or burnt the bodies, there is no doubt that many more of the cattle would have been saved.

I believe that the Abyssinians are the only people who noose the leopard for their skins and not because they are destructive, as it is seldom they do any great harm to the flocks in the highlands, especially when monkeys are so plentiful, and the duikers and oribis so easily captured. The leopard in the low lands is a great deal bolder and more dangerous than those that live in the mountains. The trap is generally set in one of the enormous sycamore fig-trees which are so common throughout the country, or any big tree that overhangs a building is chosen. Prickly bushes are cut down and laid round the trunk of the tree, leaving only

one opening by which the stem can be approached, and that not more than two feet wide. A strong but pliable branch is then bent down from the tree and pegged to the earth with a catch; a rope made of the strongest fibre, or of twisted hide with six to eight feet of copper wire firmly attached to the end is then attached to the branch, and the loop of copper wire is put into position in the run; the trap then acts as an ordinary springe and the leopard is caught round the neck; his attempts to get the wire off his neck withdraw the peg that holds the branch to the ground, and its strength jerks the leopard from its feet, and it either has its neck broken at once or dies of strangulation.

The bait employed is a very young kid or lamb, which is tied to the tree or placed in one of the lower branches near the stem and it naturally keeps up an incessant bleating wishing to return to its mother, and of course on a still night can be heard at a great distance and attracts the hungry leopard. Cases very often occur when the leopard is not caught by the neck, but behind the shoulders or just in front of the hind legs round the stomach, and then he is suspended in the air some four or five feet perhaps from the ground. The noise he makes with his cries and struggles to get free awakes the people in the neighbouring cottages, and if it is a dark night they light torches, and then go to the snared animal and either spear him or club him to death with their quarter staves made of heavy tough wood.

The same plan is resorted to if the trap is set in the zareba that encloses the buildings; the thorn bushes are moved so the leopard can leap on one of the buildings where the kid is fastened to the roof; an adjacent bough being used as a spring or the rope only fastened to some beam belonging to the house, and when the leopard springs down from the roof the wire loop tightens. I had often seen leopard skins showing no trace of a wound and imagined that the animals had been poisoned; they were entirely without holes except the skinning slit that I have described before in this chapter, but I never believed that they were killed in this manner.

Although I have not actually seen one caught, I have seen the body of a leopard a few hours after it had been killed in this way, and I have seen the traps ready for setting on several occasions. It takes two or three men to bend down the branch to the requisite position, and another to

set the trap. It only wants a very short time when once the noose is tightly round its neck for an animal that has its two front legs off the ground to strangle. It cannot get much purchase with its teeth on the copper wire so that it can bite it in two, nor can the claws make any impression on it, as they slip off the wire which gets between the joints of the paws. Leopard skins can be purchased in nearly every market in Abyssinia, and they sometimes can be had in great numbers at reasonable prices.

CHAPTER XXI

OUTFIT AND RIFLES

THE question of what kind of rifles are required for shooting the different kinds of game found in this country is a matter of opinion, and I do not think that any two sportsmen would entirely agree on the subject, and I certainly should never offer to give any one advice and try to induce him to stick to any particular kind of rifle if he fancied another kind. I always think as long as one is armed with a good rifle with plenty of penetration that it is not the fault of the weapon if kills do not result, but that of the man who is behind it, that is to say if the bullet can be relied on. How many times have I heard men say, "Oh I cannot shoot with this gun, it is not a good one." No man goes out shooting with a new pair of boots on that never have been worn, and no man ought to be so reckless as to go out with a new rifle that he has never shot before to shoot at dangerous game. No man can walk properly in a pair of boots that do not fit, and no man can shoot at first with a new gun that is either too long or too short for him in the stock; the same holds good with a rifle, and more care should be taken to get a proper fit with the latter than with the former, as it is not target practice but snap shooting that is required.

I have shot with muzzle-loading rifles of small and large calibre; the largest, one of Sir Samuel Baker's babies that he used to kill elephants with in Ceylon. With breech-loaders, commencing with a double-barrel rifle, No. 10 bore, of great weight, until the modern ·303 came into fashion, passing through the stage of Express ·577 and ·450, Sporting Snider, Sporting Martini-Henry and many others, the penetration of ·303 is the greatest of all and, if the bullet is put in the right place, answers every purpose, as no animal possesses a head hard enough to stop it.

When I go on my next visit to Africa and into the big game country, I shall take one of the new ·400 bore rifles,

as on paper it seems to be more powerful than any of the old rifles, and a ·303, and of course a common 12 bore shotgun for small fur and feather, for which I shall go to Messrs Bland & Sons, as I have shot with their weapons for many years and I can find no fault with them. The ·400 bore I shall use for dangerous game, the other for its range, accuracy and penetration and its general handiness and light weight. The 12 bore shotgun should not be a choke, as a few bullet cartridges always come in handy, and often when out shooting small game for the pot something big is unexpectedly come across.

My experience of the old ·303 bullet used and served out to the troops for the government rifle is that it never can be depended upon to stop anything, as it all depends where it strikes what sort of a wound it makes. It is fatal if it strikes the head, and it often pulverises any big bone if it catches it direct; but it will pass through soft tissues without doing any harm, and half-a-dozen holes in an animal (or even in a savage man) need not necessarily do any great damage or render it harmless, which is the object one always has in view. Sentimentalism should never be allowed to enter into sport or war against savages, which are both undertaken for the sake of killing; and I do not believe, nor do I believe that anyone else honestly does, in the theory that weapons should be used so as to make as light a wound as possible. Continental Europe may wish it, and may make remarks at our wickedness in using the dum-dum, which is a really first-class destroyer and the most humane expanding non-explosive bullet I have as yet seen for a small-calibre rifle. It is an excellent bullet to stop a dangerous wild animal or a wild man, and no doubt will be used with good effect on any of England's invaders.

I was shooting last year with one of Bland's ·303 rifles with dum-dum bullets also manufactured by the same firm, and the effects of them were all that could be desired, many of the antelope collapsing as they stood or, if on the move, never going further than a few yards, and that only from the impetus they had on when they were struck. Some of the natives laughed at the idea of such a small bullet doing any harm, but when they saw the results they said the devil was inside of it. The dum-dum bullet, which, perhaps my non-sporting readers do not know, mushrooms when it strikes anything hard enough to break the outside nickel envelope, and on entering an animal it makes a hole of very small

dimensions and a very large one if it comes out on the opposite side and has met any very hard substance in its course. If it does not penetrate the animal altogether, it is more often than not found on the opposite side to the point of entrance, the nickel case very much expanded and with sharp and ragged edges.

I killed a "gerenhuk" antelope, a large buck, while it was running at a distance of over three hundred paces; breaking the near shoulder and shattering the bones of the far shoulder, and bringing out of the wound part of the internal organs and bones. This animal collapsed into the bush he was passing. Not a vestige of the nickel or lead core of the bullet could be found in the animal. If the expanded bullet had struck an animal on the far side it would have inflicted a terrible wound. I also shot a big pig, a boar with a very tough hide; it was standing tail on at a measured distance of one hundred and twenty-five yards; the bullet broke one of its hind thighs in the thickest part, traversed the whole of the body and entirely smashed the fore shoulder on the opposite side, bringing out part of the lungs. This animal simply rolled over and never moved, and the bullet, after passing through, struck a rock some ten yards further on and was splintered into fragments.

I could give many examples of the smashing power of the ·303 rifle with the dum-dum bullet, but they would interest few people. I am convinced that in the hands of a good sportsman and shot that its killing powers are ample for both soft and hard skinned animals, and I would have no hesitation in using it against elephant, buffalo or lion, and in preference to a heavy rifle with a heavy charge. It is a pleasure, when shooting in a hot country with many mountains that have to be gone up or down, to have a light rifle in which one can have full confidence, and I do not think that a single-barrel magazine rifle is a drawback, and it is seldom that a second shot is fired without resighting. Granted that a double-barrel rifle is quicker by a couple of seconds than a single-barrel magazine in getting a second shot, the latter is far more rapid after the second shot, and afterwards the double-barrel has not a "look in" in the race for rapidity.

I am not an advocate for shooting solid bullets out of a ·303 rifle at any game, as, unless they go through the brain or heart or divide the main artery of the throat, they will not stop or cripple an animal, and it would be simply a fool's business to use them at dangerous game. I have given the

solid bullet an ample trial, and it is a rare thing to bag a soft-skinned antelope wounded by it, and I do not believe that one gets five per cent. of one's hits. My mounted servants have often followed animals for miles without being able to come up with them, and have reported on their return that although they have found blood tracks the wounded beast was going as strong as ever. I regret that I had to make the experiment as I must have caused an unnecessary amount of pain in gaining my experience, and my servants also suffered, as they did not get as much meat as they otherwise would have done. The solid bullet fails out of a small-bore rifle at soft-skinned game there can be no doubt, but at dangerous hard-skinned animals the penetration will be found to be so great that they can be approached from behind, and a shot between the hind legs will come out of the chest, and a fatal wound can be fired from behind the animal equally as well as going up and getting the head shot. There is less fear of the animal charging, and when turning a head or side shot is obtained.

I daresay by this time there is a great mass of evidence in the hands of our military experts to prove that as a man or beast stopping bullet the solid one constructed of one material is most unsatisfactory, and what is wanted is a good trustworthy expanding one. It is all twaddle and nonsense talking about cruelty; war either against the human being or wild animal means death, and let us by all means have a weapon which will bring it about in as speedy a manner as possible. The only reason why the old Snider rifle was done away with was that it was not a long-range weapon and its trajectory was so high, but at a short distance it was a most powerful man-stopper. Look at the wound made by this rifle at a short distance; it was a hole that let daylight in, and very few men ever recovered if hit in the chest or head, and if it caught a leg or arm bone the member had to come off. Soldiers belonging to King Johannes and Ras Aloula had some stands of these rifles, and they used to swear by them as being for a short distance a weapon that meant certain death to their adversary.

Those that were present after the fight of General M'Neill's zareba or of Tofrick near Suakin in 1885, the last time this weapon was largely used, may remember that it was very easy to recognise those Dervishes that were killed by the Snider from the ones killed by the Martini-Henry, with which the Indian and English troops were armed with re-

spectively, and no doubt that day many a Tommy Atkins would have preferred the larger bored rifle, as many of them got wounded by the bullet of the Martini-Henry not being a proper man-stopper. Tommy is the man who has to win our fights for us, and it is a shame to provide him with a bullet that won't stop his adversary, especially as the insane idea of our officials always make them fight with great odds against him, and has nearly always to tackle the savage, who generally will carry more lead than a Christian.

I do not believe that he will ever be content in a European fight if he has to shoot what he will call "blooming peas" at his enemy, nor do I believe that the next European war will be fought on the French duel principle, with microscopic bullets. Shrapnel shells and all these terrible destructive explosives are allowed in civilised warfare, and they make a much worse wound than a common expanding bullet like the dum-dum, and if the one is permitted why should not the other be?

In conclusion regarding the arms for game shooting, the ones I mentioned are good enough for me, but different people have different opinions and different fads, and as long as some people, young Anaks, like carrying about young cannon and heavy battering ordnance they are at liberty to do so; but I prefer the lighter weapons which I get from Messrs Bland & Sons, as they answer all my purposes, and those are the ·400 and ·303, the former with solid and expanding bullets for the most dangerous game, the latter with only expanding bullets, as the solid ones act as a "pin-prick," exasperates but does no great harm.

There are many firms in London that will sell a traveller an outfit, and nearly all will try and dispose of a lot of things which may be useful but are unnecessary and only a trouble to carry about. The following remarks are made for those who do not wish to expend too much money, and what I consider ample to insure comfort. If the purse runs to an unlimited expenditure, do by all means take everything and live in the wilds of Africa the same as in England. I have seen shooting parties in different parts of the East that had everything that money could buy, and sat down to dinner at night to a meal that would have done justice to a first-class European restaurant in Paris or London—soup, fish, three or four entrées, joint, game, sweets, dessert, etc., with iced champagne and every known wine; the whole served up on a spotless white tablecloth with silver dishes and

cutlery with crest and monogram complete. I prefer something much simpler; soup, a small dish and a joint or curry being ample after a hard day, and with the qualifying sauce of a good desert appetite it does not want French cookery or a mass of dishes to satisfy one's hunger.

The traveller and sportsman will find that he has much better health if he takes plain food of good quality and unlimited quantity as soon after sunset as possible when the day's work is over, and a good meal before starting out in the morning, with biscuit, sardines or potted meat; a cold guinea-fowl or francolin or some other game for lunch, as although a healthy man does not require more than two big meals a day, any feelings of emptiness ought to be checked as then fatigue soon comes on, and by overdoing it on an empty stomach more chances of getting ill arise than from any other cause. My maxim in travelling has always been, if possible, to have something to eat with me, as one never knows what may occur, and at what time one may get the next meal; and a fair sized haversack with a broad sling is nothing for the syce or tracker to carry, and they are always willing to help to consume the contents. If the food is not required, when nearing camp give the men the contents of the haversack, especially if it contains a sweet biscuit or two, as a reward for being saddled all day with the extra weight. It will often be found that if one forgets to order lunch that they will see after it themselves; and if one wants to get at the affections of these people, the easiest way is through their stomachs. Many of them are also as keen on sport as their masters, and they look forward to the day's outing.

On buying a tent always choose one that is made of the best material; the Willesden Rotproof and Waterproof Canvas I have used for many years, and it answers every purpose. The tent should always have a double roof, as they are always many degrees cooler in the hot weather, and in the rainy season or in cold weather they are always drier and warmer. Damp and cold are two of the greatest enemies to the human being in Africa and Abyssinia. The outside covering of the tent should reach the ground, as the space between the outer and inner covering serves for putting luggage in and keeping it out of the sun and damp, and in wet weather as a place for one's personal servant to sleep in. Guys should be fastened at the middle of each side of the outer covering to prevent it from flapping, and all tent poles, both upright and ridge, should be bayonet-socketed; as in

gales of wind, which often occur, if these precautions are not taken the tent is liable to collapse by the wind getting under the outer covering and lifting the upper parts of the upright poles out of their sockets. This has happened to me before, and the misery of turning out on a dark night in a tropical rain is no joke, and it generally ends in the majority of the contents of the tent getting wet. The ends of the upper poles that fit into the sockets of the lower poles should be of metal and the same length as the socket, as if made entirely of wood in damp weather the wood swells and they become very difficult to undo.

Wooden tent pegs that the outfitters try to sell with the tent are all very well for Europe or England, but are not suitable for African work; they should be made of galvanised iron. If wooden tent pegs are driven into hard ground their points soon go and split, and when underground are liable to be eaten by white ants. There are places in Abyssinia where no suitable wood for tent pegs is procurable, and there is also stony ground into which an iron peg can be driven but not a wooden one. Never have a wooden mallet, the heads always fly off in the dry weather and they also split and easily get broken; a hammer should take its place and should be made entirely of iron or steel; it can then be used for other purposes besides driving in tent pegs, and if made of good material should never break.

The tent should have pockets all round the sides to contain odds and ends that are required daily, such as books and papers, and a change of clothes, pyjamas, etc. The flooring of the tent, which ought to be permanently attached to the two sides, should be at least nine inches broader than they are now made, as at present they only just meet at the centre and leave nothing for overlapping. At each end of the tent at the bottom there is a small overhanging piece which ought to tuck under the flooring and prevent water entering the tent; this is also a great deal too narrow and wants to be at least nine inches broad. Tents are generally sent out by the makers with flimsy tape strings to fasten the ends together; these tapes are the greatest trouble, as they are always breaking, and on a cold dark night tying up or undoing so many bows is a nuisance, conducive to bad temper and bad language. Straps firmly sewn on are much easier managed and more speedily worked. The slings by which the inner part of the tent is fastened to the ridge pole are generally too weak and wear out; they

want strengthening and firmly sewing on. Two windows should be fitted instead of one to get a current of air and keep the tent cool; these should be fitted with gauze curtains to prevent the flies and mosquitos from entering; these insects being the greatest pests, the one by day and the other by night. A siesta during the day is often required, and an undisturbed sleep when suffering from slight fever is one of the best medicines. Never buy a white tent; green or brown are the best colours, or some neutral tint to neutralise the effect of the glare of the sun. The Willesden canvas, as I mentioned before, is as good as any, but a darker green is required than that which is ordinarily sold, which so soon fades and then there is a glare in the tent which becomes uncomfortable, besides the tent looks dirty. A clean camp with tidy servants is always a blessing, and stamps the owner as being an Englishman. The camps belonging to Abyssinians and Frenchmen are always slovenly and dirty.

It is false economy to choose a bed made of too light material, and a few extra pounds in weight make a lot of difference in the article, and a light bed never lasts, and one that gives or is the least uncomfortable prevents a good night's rest. It should also be fitted with curtains to keep out all insects; they should be high and large enough to put a table and chair under, so that writing or painting can be done in comfort. For clinging pertinacity and annoyance the Abyssinian fly is as bad as the Egyptian. Bed blankets should be warm and of a brown colour and made as sacks, so that they can be slept in during cold weather. A good pillow or two should be taken, but never buy an india-rubber one that has to be inflated, as they do not last, and the wind escapes during the night and in the morning they have collapsed.

The best chair to take is a Delamere armchair made by Silver of Cornhill. It will stand any amount of hard work, and is very comfortable. A common folding deck-chair should not be forgotten; they are very light and will go on the top of any load, and therefore can be used till the last moment before leaving, and they are the last thing to be packed and the first to be taken off the transport animals. Boxes should all be of steel; wood and leather should always be avoided, for they easily get damaged by white ants and damp. However, this does not refer to a small handbag or a small portmanteau which can be kept off the ground. The size of the boxes should not exceed twenty-four inches in length by thirteen inches in breadth by ten inches in height.

These measurements I think are the best for the following reasons,—one is a light load for a man or woman, two for a donkey, three or four for a mule according to its size, and a camel will carry half-a-dozen. They should be fitted with locks with different keys and one master key to open all; they should have rounded edges and corners and no sharp points, as they are apt to chafe or gall the transport animals. It is a good thing if possible to keep all boxes to one size, as there is less difficulty in loading and no squabbling between the porters or owners of beasts trying to take small packages and leaving the larger ones till the last.

There are several ways of getting to Abyssinia, and it all depends what part is intended to be visited. If the south, it has to be entered through Somaliland, either from Zeilah, Bulhar or Berberah, and then the shortest way is by steamer to Aden and then by coasting steamer. Massowah can also be reached in the same way by changing at Aden, as the Italian local mail steamer meets every outgoing English mail boat to receive the post from Europe and leaves *via* the Italian settlement of Assab for Massowah. Another way is *via* Genoa and Port Said. Luggage can be booked through to Massowah from London by applying to Messrs Gellatly, Sewell & Co., the well-known shipping firm, who have agents at Massowah, and they are always most civil and obliging both in London and abroad, doing everything to help the traveller on his way and taking an interest in his welfare up-country. Many people have to thank them for what they have done, and they are a friendly, connecting link between the old country and these strange parts of the world. The steamers from Genoa start for Massowah every fourteen days, calling at Port Said where they can be joined by going by the overland route, making Massowah within ten or eleven days of London; they are fairly comfortable, and the passengers are mostly government officials and military men going for the first time or returning from leave in Italy to the colony of Erithrea. Valuable hints and the last news about Erithrea and Abyssinia can always be obtained from them, providing the traveller can talk French, as the majority of the Italian officials talk that language. I think the Genoa route the best, as there is less trouble, and there is always a rush at Aden, to procure the luggage from the Peninsular and Oriental steamers and getting it on board the local boat, and a week at Aden, unless one knows the very hospitable officials and leading Englishmen, is a waste of time.

Massowah has its drawbacks, and the hotels and their accommodation used to be very bad, and the best plan to adopt is to proceed at once to Sahaati by train and pitch camp there. One can then tell if there is a shortage of anything in the outfit, and what is wanting from Massowah, and in the European stores provisions of all sorts can be purchased quite as cheap as in England, and Italian preserves of all sorts very much cheaper, so there is no necessity to import and pay duty on things that can be bought just as easily on the spot. The Italians take a great deal more interest in an Englishman, and are more willing to help him if he spends money in the country, and why an Englishman should import things when he can procure them on the spot, is a mystery to them.

Servants in numbers can be procured at Massowah, many talking English, French, Italian, Arabic, Hindustanie, and Abyssinian ; some can talk all six languages, and there is never any difficulty in procuring suitable servants. Some of them are first-rate people who know the country thoroughly, having taken part in the numerous campaigns or having served other Europeans. A guarantee from a local householder can generally be procured, and it is always a safe thing to have when engaging a servant. Their capabilities are many, and they can act as syces, tent servants, cooks, gun-boys, and some few of them are decent sportsmen and understand what is wanted when going after big game.

If a good gun-bearer, who is a bit of a hunter, can be procured at the coast, and if one sees he is keen at his work, he is most invaluable, as he will soon find out when up country the best local men to find game, and who know their districts thoroughly. When shooting for several months in these countries such a large area is covered, that one man who is good in one place is entirely useless in another. The choice then of local men must depend greatly on the sportsman who is shooting ; of course if the purse will run to it, one or two more hangers on at camp is no great expense, and often the rivalry between them does a great deal of good, especially if they are paid so much extra per head of the game found, not killed, as this depends on the sportsman. I have known cases of rank duffers and bad shots, never being taken up to dangerous game, as the hunters are not so much frightened for themselves as they are for the shooter, and that they may be held responsible for his death or any accident that may take place, and the death

of a sportsman is a great personal loss to them. It is always a good plan to have servants of both religions, the Mohamedans for cooks and tent servants, as they mess separately from the Christian Abyssinian, and they do not tell the others what is talked by their masters in camp. I have known several instances of what has been said in camp by Europeans, reaching the ears of Abyssinian officials, and of course it was not complimentary, and very often the officials have their spies in Massowah to find out what is going on, and purposely try and get them engaged as servants to those who are proceeding up country, so their movements can be watched.

Syces or grooms can be chosen from the Abyssinians, as they have been brought up from childhood with horses and mules, and thoroughly understand them, and often take great care and a pride in the beasts under their charge, and keep bits, chains, and stirrup irons very clean. The Abyssinians are good baggage loaders, tent pitchers, grass cutters, and for all odd work of a camp life, but they will not eat game or domestic animals killed and cooked by a Mohamedan. It is always the best plan to allow the Abyssinians to choose their own head man from among themselves, and if they then grumble they have only themselves to blame.

The head man should be the only go between master and servant, and to be held responsible for everything belonging to his department. Wages alter a great deal at different times, but they can always be found out at Massowah ; they begin at about £1 per month with food supplied ; it is always better to keep part of the wages in arrear to be paid on discharge, but even this does not prevent an Abyssinian from deserting, as if he wants to go, a small question of money does not divert him from his purpose.

Pack saddles can be procured at Massowah both for camels and mules, so there is no necessity to take them out from England ; however, an English saddle is a necessity and it should not be over large, as the mounts are generally small. It is always a good plan to take out a large roll of thickish felt to make saddle cloths for the pack mules ; if it is not required it can always be sold, and the Abyssinian traders prize it immensely, as it saves many a sore back and lasts for a very long time. Camels can be used throughout the country north of the Mareb river and throughout the whole eastern and western frontier. Mules are required south of the Mareb and in central Abyssinia.

There is a good carriage road from Sahaati to Asmara and a fair one from Asmara to Adi-Ugri or Goodofelasie, from there on to the Mareb *via* Adi-Quala camels or mules can be used. Westward from Adi-Ugri local information must be obtained, as to the state of the paths; camels can proceed, however, to the low countries, but detours may have to be made owing to the thickness of the bush. Good English axes, bill hooks and hatchets should be taken out from England for cutting bush to make zareebas, as they do the work much quicker than foreign or native made ones, and very likely a camp may be pitched for a fortnight in one place in the game country, and a good-sized piece of ground will have to be cleared and surrounded. In the country to the west it is very often that only a few branches stop what is otherwise a very decent road, and if they are removed they will allow a camel to pass with his load. A laden mule can pass and get through bush that hopelessly stops a camel, which can only proceed when unloaded, and the constant unloading and carrying the baggage for a short distance is very troublesome, and only short marches can be made. There are plenty of places which seem impossible to be got through, but with a little perseverance the difficulties can be surmounted, and better and more central shooting-grounds can be reached.

Cooking-pots can be purchased in Massowah, the stores belonging to the Europeans being furnished with every requisite. The japanned iron ware, blue outside and white inside, can be purchased very cheaply, so knives, forks and spoons are only required from home; plates, teacups, kettles, plates, dishes, drinking-cups of the same japanned ironware can all be got locally; baths are not to be obtained and should be taken out, and they are also the best things for washing clothes in. Candlesticks and candles can be obtained anywhere in the colony, but a good travelling-lantern to burn petroleum should be got in England, Lord of Birmingham makes a very good one which fits into a case, and it also holds a supply sufficient for ten days or a fortnight; petroleum can be bought cheaper in Massowah than in England, and this oil is most useful, as it serves to start a fire in rainy weather, and is useful for keeping the bacon beetle out of heads, horns and skins, and white ants from the tent.

As the weather is very hot and also very cold at times, the extremes in temperature being very great, provision in

clothing should be made for both. A dress suit and white shirts are a necessity, as the very hospitable Italian officials entertain strangers of good standing, and like seeing their guests well dressed. Flannel shirts and underclothing must be taken, and kharki suits for the low country and tweed suits for the mountains.

Everyone that travels in Abyssinia should have barometer, thermometers (ordinary and for boiling point), aneroid, compass, large and small, photographic apparatus, nets for capturing butterflies, moths and insects, with air-tight boxes for putting them in. Seeds of flowers should always be gathered, and orchids, terrestrial and celestial; they soon dry and take up but little space, and they are most interesting to the home people, if they can be got to grow. What with shooting, collecting, photographing and taking notes, the day is fully spent and time passes most rapidly, and the months passed in the country will never be regretted, but will be looked back upon as red letter days in one's existence.

On returning to the coast, the outfit that remains, and transport animals that survive, always fetch a good price, and the smaller things can be given to the servants who have behaved well. The cost of these expeditions of course varies as to the ideas of the traveller and how many take place in them. To do the business very comfortably, it can be put down at about £80 per head, per month while in the country. Transport is of course the greatest item, and one can never estimate what losses may take place or what the market value of mules and camels may be, and there is always, as in any country, a great difference in the value of different animals. Camels, horses and mules are to be obtained in Erithrea, or the former can be procured from Hodeidah, Aden or the Somali country.

English gold is the best coin to take out, it is always at a premium in these countries at the coast, and can be exchanged at the seaport for silver. Italian money is used in Erithrea—the Maria Theresa dollar in most parts of Abyssinia and in the wild part of the Soudan. In Somaliland, the rupee is taken for a certain distance into the interior and then the Maria Theresa dollar is the current coin. The Indian Banian traders and the native Jews at the coast ports generally give the highest price for English gold. Money can be left at the Post Offices at Italian settlements in Erithrea, and can be sent for when required,

saving the trouble of carrying it into the jungle, where money is next to useless, except to buy sheep from the shepherds, and one generally relies on obtaining enough game to feed all hands. Many of the native houses on the coast have agents up country, and they will often give drafts which can be cashed either for money or goods, and it saves the traveller a lot of trouble, being able to get trade cloth in the interior instead of having to carry it with him, but it is always as well to take a lot of coloured cotton handkerchiefs and a little cloth, as they do for presents to the women who bring eggs, chickens and milk into camp, and they generally prefer them to money, besides in Abyssinia there is no small change except bars of salt which are cumbersome things to carry and in wet weather the bars break and crumble away. It becomes expensive giving a dollar for a little milk, a few eggs and a chicken or two. In some parts of the country, as many as twenty chickens can be purchased for a dollar, but in most villages it would be difficult to get as many as that number, half-a-dozen perhaps only being available.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

COPY OF TREATY BETWEEN KING JOHANNES, KING OF KINGS OF ETHIOPIA, AND KING MENELEK, KING OF SHOA

Sealed on the 4th of March 1878

ARTICLE I.—King Menelek must pay tribute to King John.

ARTICLE II.—He must supply King John's army with provisions when in his dominions.

ARTICLE III.—He must cease to be called King of Kings of Ethiopia and only be called King of Shoa.

ARTICLE IV.—He must give King John assistance in any time of need.

ARTICLE V.—King John must give Menelek help in time of need.

ARTICLE VI.—King Menelek shall rule the Wollo Galla Mahomedans who are located between Shoa and Abyssinia.

ARTICLE VII.—King Menelek must build Christian Churches in the Wollo Galla country and introduce Christianity there.

ARTICLE VIII.—King Menelek must give free passage to King John's army as far as Debra Lebanos, a convent in Shoa.

Agreed to and signed by the two kings on the 14th March 1878.

King John, now Emperor of Ethiopia, crowned Menelek with his own crown as King of Shoa on the 26th March 1878, and proclaimed by his herald. "I have crowned my son Menelek as King of Shoa, honour him as you honour me."

From the Autobiography of Theophilus Waldmeir, Missionary, being an account of ten years' life in Abyssinia. A.D. 1859-1868.

Mr Theophilus Waldmeir also says :—

"King John declared war against King Menelek who was already in trouble because his own wife had revolted against him, though her rebellion was soon quelled, and the Queen and her party forgiven. Meanwhile King John was fast approaching with his destructive army, and the news filled the hearts of the Shoa people with terror. Nevertheless, King Menelek stayed at Letsche, and, hoping to end the matter peacefully, without bloodshed, he sent his ambassadors to King John to ask for peace, but they were sent back with a refusal, and the Abyssinians having already crossed the frontier, began to plunder and kill. The people of Shoa naturally expected that Menelek would gather an army, and fight against the enemy, but he remained quietly in Letsche, only putting his treasures in safety. Ultimately negotiations were re-com-

menced between the two kings, John insisting that Menelek should acknowledge him as his chief, and his country should be tributary. Menelek was forbidden to cross the northern boundary of Shoa, and was also expected to give soldiers to King John.

N.B.—This information was given to Mr Theophilus Waldmeir by a brother missionary, Mr John Mayer, who returned to Abyssinia to King Menelek, and who was turned out of the country with other missionaries by the order of King Johannes in 1886. This Mr Mayer, writing under the date of May 1886, says :—

"I am very sorry to hear from the people that King Menelek again allows the traders to carry on their horrible business of the slave trade. This sad news was confirmed by the fact, that several slave dealers brought six hundred young Galla girls, with many boys, and joined our caravan towards Tajurrah."

N.B.—Messrs Waldmeir and Mayer were prisoners at Magdala, and were released by the English expedition, and returned again to Abyssinia.

A. B. W.

APPENDIX II

Treaty between Great Britain, Egypt and Abyssinia

Signed at Adowa June 3rd, 1884

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and His Majesty Johannes, made by the Almighty King of Sion, Negoosa Negust of Ethiopia and its Dependencies, and His Highness Mahamed Tewfik, Khedive of Egypt, being desirous of settling the differences which exist between the said Johannes, Negoosa Negust of Ethiopia and Mahamed Tewfik Khedive of Egypt, and of establishing an everlasting peace between them, have agreed to conclude a Treaty for this purpose which shall be binding on themselves, their heirs, and successors ; and Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, having appointed as her Representative, Rear Admiral Sir William Hewett, Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's ships of war in the East Indies, and His Majesty the Negoosa Negust of Ethiopia acting on his own behalf, and His Highness the Khedive of Egypt having appointed as his Representative, His Excellency Mason Bey, Governor of Massowah, they have agreed upon and concluded the following Articles :—

ARTICLE I

From the date of signing of this Treaty there shall be free transit through Massowah to and from Abyssinia for all goods, including arms and ammunition under British protection.

ARTICLE II

On and after the 1st day of September 1884, corresponding to the 8th day of Maskarram 1877, the country called Bogos shall be restored to His Majesty the Negoosa Negust ; and when the troops of His Highness the Khedive shall have left the garrisons of Kassala Amedib and Sauheit, the buildings in the Bogos country which now belong to His Highness

the Khedive, together with all the stores and munitions of war which shall then remain in the said buildings, shall be delivered to and become the property of His Majesty the Negoosa Negust.

ARTICLE III

His Majesty the Negoosa Negust engages to facilitate the withdrawal of the troops of His Highness the Khedive from Kassala, Amedib and Sanheit through Ethiopia to Massowah.

ARTICLE IV

His Highness the Khedive engages to grant all the facilities which His Majesty the Negoosa Negust may require in the matter of appointing Aboonas for Ethiopia.

ARTICLE V

His Majesty the Negoosa Negust and His Highness the Khedive engage to deliver up the one to the other any criminal or criminals who may have fled to escape punishment, from the dominions of the one to the dominions of the other.

ARTICLE VI

His Majesty the Negoosa Negust agrees to refer all differences with His Highness the Khedive which may arise after the signing of this Treaty to Her Britannic Majesty for settlement.

ARTICLE VII

The present Treaty shall be ratified by Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and by his Highness the Khedive of Egypt, and the ratification shall be forwarded to Adowa as soon as possible.

In witness whereof Rear-Admiral Sir W. Hewett, on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and His Majesty the Negoosa Negust on his own behalf, and His Excellency Mason Bey on behalf of His Highness the Khedive of Egypt have signed and affixed their seals to this Treaty made at Adowa the 3rd day of June 1884, corresponding to the 27th day of Goounet 1876.

(Kings Seal)

(L. S.) W. HEWETT.

(L. S.) MASON.

REMARKS

ARTICLE I.—This was never carried out as Italy took Massowah and supplied King Menelek with arms against King Johannes through Assab.

ARTICLE II.—The territory was given over. The word restored is used proving that Abyssinia never relinquished her claim to this country.

ARTICLE III.—Carried out on behalf of Abyssinia with exception of Kassala, see pages 35, 36 why this was not done.

ARTICLE IV.—Egypt carried out this clause.

N.B.—Before Captain Harrington was appointed in 1898 to represent Her Majesty's Government at the Court of King Menelek at Adese Ababa, no English representative was stationed in Abyssinia and we have been therefore unable to protect British interests or to watch the very important developments that have occurred in this country. Had

someone been left with King Johannes to report to our Government what was taking place in Abyssinia its history would have been different, and we might have been the first foreign power in the country which at present we are not, and we do not know what this neglect may cost us in the future.

APPENDIX III

Treaty between Her Majesty and His Majesty the King of Abyssinia for the Suppression of the Slave Trade

Signed at Adowa June 3rd 1884

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and His Majesty Johannes, made by the Almighty King of Sion, Negoosa Negust of Ethiopia and its dependencies, being desirous of prohibiting and perpetually abolishing the Slave Trade, they have agreed to conclude a Treaty for this purpose, which shall be binding on themselves, their heirs, and successors, and to that end Rear-Admiral Sir William Hewett, Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's ships of war in the East Indies, acting on the behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and His Majesty Johannes, Negoosa Negust of Ethiopia, acting on his own behalf, they have agreed upon and concluded the following Articles :—

ARTICLE I

His Majesty the Negoosa Negust agrees to prohibit and to prevent, to the best of his ability, the buying and selling of slaves within his dominions.

ARTICLE II

His Majesty the Negoosa Negust agrees to prohibit and to prevent, to the best of his ability, the import or export of slaves to or from his dominions.

ARTICLE III

His Majesty the Negoosa Negust engages to protect, to the utmost of his power all liberated slaves, and to punish severely any attempt to molest them, or to reduce them again to slavery.

ARTICLE IV

Her Britannic Majesty has made Treaties with many Foreign States, by which it is permitted to her officers to seize all ships belonging to such Foreign States engaged in the transport or conveyance of Slaves upon the sea ; and Her Majesty engages to liberate any subjects of His Majesty the Negoosa Negust, who may be found detained as slaves in any ship captured by the officers of Her Majesty, and to take steps to send such subjects back to the dominions of His Majesty the Negoosa Negust.

ARTICLE V

The present Treaty shall be ratified, and the ratification shall be forwarded to Adowa as soon as possible.

In witness whereof, Rear-Admiral Sir William Hewett, on the behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and Johannes, Negoosa Negust of Ethiopa, on his own behalf,

have signed the same, and (or) have affixed their seals to this Treaty made at Adowa the 3rd day of June 1884, corresponding to the 27th day of Goonvet 1876.

(L. S.) Seal of the King of Abyssinia.
(L. S.) W. Hewett.

Note.—King Johannes faithfully carried out this treaty with England, and there is no known case of slaves passing through his dominions from the time it was signed till his death, although King Menelek allowed slave caravans to pass through his territory, see Appendix I., and the information given by Mr John Mayer. Galla slaves from King Menelek's dominions have always been and still are for sale in Hodeidah and Mecca.

A. B. W.

APPENDIX IV

Treaty between Great Britain and Ethiopia

Signed by the Emperor Menelek II. and by Her Majesty's Envoy at Adie Abbaba 14th May 1897.

Ratified by the Queen, July 28th, 1897.

ENGLISH VERSION.

The Amharic version, signed by King Menelek, appeared in the left column of the Original Treaty.

Her Majesty Victoria, by the Grace of God, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and His Majesty Menelek II., by the Grace of God, King of Kings of Ethiopia, being desirous of strengthening and rendering more effective and profitable the ancient friendship which has existed between their respective kingdoms ;

Her Majesty Queen Victoria having appointed as her special Envoy and Representative to His Majesty the Emperor Menelek II., James Rennell Rodd, Esq., Companion of The Most Distinguished Order of St Michael and St George, whose full powers have been found in due and proper form, and His Majesty the Emperor Menelek, negotiating in his own name as King of Kings of Ethopia, they have agreed upon and do conclude the following articles, which shall be binding on themselves, their heirs and successors :—

ARTICLE I

The subjects of or persons protected by each of the contracting parties shall have full liberty to come and go and engage in commerce in the territories of the other, enjoying the protection of the government within whose jurisdiction they are ; but it is forbidden for armed bands from either side to cross the frontier of the other on any pretext whatever, without previous authorization from the competent authorities.

ARTICLE II

The frontiers of the British Protectorate on the Somali coast recognised by the Emperor Menelek shall be determined subsequently by exchange of notes between James Rennell Rodd Esq. as representative of Her Majesty the Queen, and Ras Maconen as representative of His Majesty the Emperor Menelek, at Harrar. These notes shall be annexed

to the present Treaty, of which they will form an integral part as soon as they have received the approval of the High Contracting Parties, pending which the *status quo* shall be maintained.

ARTICLE III

The caravan route between Zeyla and Harrar by way of Gildessa shall remain open throughout its whole extent to the commerce of both nations.

ARTICLEI V

His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia on the one hand accords to Great Britain and her Colonies, in respect of import duties and local taxation, every advantage which he may accord to the subjects of other nations.

On the other hand all material destined exclusively for the service of the Ethiopian State shall, on application from His Majesty the Emperor, be allowed to pass through the port of Zeyla into Ethiopia free of duty.

ARTICLE V

The transit of firearms and ammunition destined for His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia through the territories depending on the Government of Her Britannic Majesty is authorized, subject to the conditions prescribed by the General Act of the Brussels Conference, signed the 2nd July 1890.

ARTICLE VI

His Majesty the Emperor Menelek II., King of Kings of Ethiopia, engages himself towards the Government of Her Britannic Majesty to do all in his power to prevent the passage through his dominions of arms and ammunition to the Mahdists whom he declares to be the enemies of his Empire.

The present Treaty shall come into force as soon as its ratification by Her Britannic Majesty shall have been notified to the Emperor of Ethiopia, but it is understood that the prescriptions of Article VI. shall be put into force from the date of its signature.

In faith of which His Majesty Menelek II., King of Kings of Ethiopia, in his own name, and James Rennell Rodd, Esq., on behalf of Her Majesty Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, have signed the present Treaty in duplicate, written in the English and Amharic languages identically, both texts being considered as official and have thereto affixed their seals.

Done at Adis-Abbaba the 14th day of May 1897.

(L.S.) Signed JAMES RENNELL RODD.
(Seal of His Majesty the Emperor Menelek II.)

N.B.—This treaty is binding on King Menelek's heirs and successors and they are not at present known, therefore the future is insecure, unless it is arranged beforehand, who will succeed him. The treaty with King Johannes was also binding on his heirs and successors, and the time it was signed, King Johannes was in the prime of life, and had a strong and healthy son who was married to King Menelek's daughter, and there was every prospect of their having children. Both the King and his son died, and although the King on his death-bed nominated his illegitimate son, Ras Mangesha, to succeed him, the princes quarrelled amongst themselves who was to have the throne. There are four or five persons

now in Abyssinia that have chances, but it is not certain who will actually receive the crown. So most likely there will be fighting unless it is known who King Menelek wishes to succeed him, and he is acknowledged by the principal Rases before the King's death.

ANNEXES TO TREATY SIGNED AT ADIS-ABBABA ON THE 14TH MAY 1897, BY HIS MAJESTY THE EMPEROR MENELEK, AND BY MR JAMES RENNELL RODD.

ANNEXES AU TRAITÉ SIGNÉ À ADIS ABBABA LE 14 MAI 1897 PAR SA MAJESTÉ L'EMPEREUR MÉNÉLEK ET PAR MONS. JAMES RENNELL RODD.

ANNEX I

Mr RODD to the EMPEROR MENELEK

ADIS-ABABA, *May* 14, 1897.

YOUR MAJESTY,

With reference to Article II. of the Treaty which we are to sign to-day, I am instructed by my Government in the event of a possible occupation by Ethiopia of territories inhabited by tribes who have formerly accepted and enjoyed British protection in the districts excluded from the limits of the British Protectorate on the Somali Coast as recognised by Your Majesty, to bring to your knowledge the desire of Her Majesty the Queen to receive from Your Majesty an assurance that it will be your special care that those tribes receive equitable treatment and are thus no losers by this transfer of suzerainty.

In expressing the hope that Your Majesty will enable me to give this assurance, I have &c.

(Signed) RENNELL RODD.

(TRADUCTION)

ADDIS-ABBABA, *le* 14 *Mai* 1897.

VOTRE MAJESTÉ,

Me référant à l'Article II. du Traité qui sera signé entre nous aujourd'hui, je suis chargé par mon Gouvernement de porter à la connaissance de Votre Majesté, dans le cas où l'Éthiopie entrera, éventuellement en occupation de territories habités par les tribus, qui avaient anterieurement accepté et joui de la protection Britannique dans les regions exclues de la limite reconnue par Votre Majesté comme frontière du Protectorat Britannique sur la Côte des Somalis, le désir de Sa Majesté la Reine de recevoir une assurance de le part de votre Majesté quélle s'occupera tout spécialement à pourvoir que ces tribus seront traiteés équitablement afin qu éls ne perdent rien par ce transfèrement de suzeraineté.

En exprimant l'espoir que Votre Majesté me permettra de donner cette assurance j'ai, &c.

Signé RENNEL RODD.

The EMPEROR MENELEK to Mr RODD

(TRANSLATION)

The Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Menelek II. by the grace of God, King of Kings of Ethiopia to Mr Rennell Rodd, Envoy of the Kingdom of England.

Peace be unto you.

Your letter written in Genbot 1889, respecting the Somalis, has

reached me. With regard to the question you have put to me, I give you the assurance that the Somalis who may by boundary arrangements become subjects of Ethiopia shall be well treated and have orderly government.

Written at Adis-Abbaba the 6th Genbot 1889 (14th May 1897).

(Seal of His Majesty the Emperor Menelek II.)

ANNEX II

The Emperor Menelek to Mr Rodd

From Menelek II. by the grace of God, King of Kings of Ethiopia. Conquering Lion of the tribe of Judah.

May this reach James Rennell Rodd.

Peace be unto you.

With reference to the Treaty which we have written in the Amharic and English languages at Adis-Abbaba, as I have no interpreter with me who understands the English language well enough to compare the English and Amharic version, if by any possibility in the future there should ever be found any misunderstanding between the Amharic and English versions in any of the Articles of this Treaty, let this translation which is written in the French language and which I enclose in this letter, be the witness between us, and if you accept this proposal send me word of your acceptance by letter.

Dated 7th Genbot 1889 (14th May 1897).

(Seal of His Majesty the Emperor Menelek II.)

Inclosure in above letter.

(Traduction)

Sa Majesté Victoria, par la grâce de Dieu Reine de la Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande, Impératrice des Indes, et Sa Majesté Ménélek II., Roi des Rois d'Éthiopie désireux de fortifier et de rendre plus efficace et advantageuse l'ancienne amitié qui existe entre les deux Royaumes.

Sa Majesté la Reine Victoria ayant nommé comme son Envoyé Extraordinaire et Représentant auprès de sa Majesté l'Empereur Ménélek, James Rennell Rodd Esquire, Compagnon de l'Honorable Ordre de Saint-Michel et Saint Georges, dont les pleins pouvoirs ont été reconnus et bonne en due forme ; et

Sa Majesté l'Émpereur Ménélek, agissant en son propre nom come Ro des Rois d'Éthiopie.

Se sont accordés sur, et ont conclu, les Articles qui suivent, par lesquels ils s'engagent eux-mêmes, ainsi que leurs héritiers et successeurs :—

ARTICLE I

Les sujets et protégés de chacune des deux Parties Contractantes auront pleine liberté d'entrer, de sortir, et d'exercer leur commerce dans les territoires de l'autre jouissant de la protection du Gouvernement sous la juridiction duquel ils se trouvent, mais il est défendu aux bandes armées d'une part ainsi que de l'autre de traverser les frontières du voisin sous un prétexte quelconque sans permission préalable des autorités compétentes.

ARTICLE II

Les frontières du Protectorat Britannique sur la côte des Somalis, reconnues par Sa Majesté Menelik, seront réglées ulterieurement par

échange de notes entre James Rennell Rodd, Esquire comme Représentant de Sa Majesté la Reine et Ras Meconen, comme Représentant de Sa Majesté l'Empereur Ménélek au Harrar. Ces notes seront annexées au présent Traité dont elles formeront partie intégrale sitôt qu'elles ont été approuveés par les Hautes Parties Contractantes. En attendant, le statu quo sera maintenu.

ARTICLE III

Il est convenu que la route des caravanes entre Zeïla et le Harrar par voie De Gildessa restera ouverte dans tout son parcours au commerce des deux nations.

ARTICLE IV

Sa Majesté l'Empereur d'Éthiopie de son côté accordera à la Grande-Bretagne et ses Colonies en ce qui concerne droits de douane et impôts intérieurs tous les avantages qu'il accordera aux sujets d'autres nations. De l'autre côté, tout matériel destiné exclusivement au service de l'État Éthiopien aura le droit de passer en Éthiopie par le port de Zeïla en franchise de douane sur demande de Sa Majesté l'Empereur.

ARTICLE V

Le transit de tous les engins de guerre destinés à Sa Majesté l'Empereur d'Éthiopie est autorisé à travers les territoires dépendant du Gouvernement de sa Majesté Britannique sous les conditions prescrites par l'Acte Général de la Conférence de Bruxelles signé le 2 Juillet 1890.

ARTICLE VI

Sa Majesté Ménélek II Roi des Rois d'Éthiopie s'engage vis-a-vis du Gouvernement Britannique, à empêcher de son mieux le passage à travers de son Empire desarmes et munitions aux Mahdistes, qu'il déclare ennemis de son Empire.

Le présent Traité entrera en vigueur sitôt que la ratification de Sa Majesté Britannique sera notificé à Sa Majesté l'Empereur d'Éthiopie, mais il est entendu que les prescriptions de l'Article VI seront mises en exécution a partir du jour de sa signature.

En foi de quoi Sa Majesté Ménélek II. Roi des Rois d'Ethiopie en son propre nom et Rennell Rodd, Esquire, pour Sa Majesté Victoria Reine de la Grande Bretagne et d'Irelande, Impératrice des Indes, ont signés le présent Traité, fait en deux exemplaires, ecrit en Anglais et en Amharique identiquement les deux textes etant considérés comme officiels, et yont affixé leurs sceaux.

Fait a Adis Abbaba, le 14 Mais, 1897.

(Seal of His Majesty the Emperor Menelek II.)

Mr Rodd to the Emperor Menelek

Adis-Abbaba, *May* 14, 1897.

Your Majesty,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Majesty's letter inclosing the French translation of the Treaty which we are to sign this day in English, and Amharic, and I agree, on behalf of my Government, to the proposal of your Majesty, that in case a divergency of opinion should arise hereafter as to the correct interpretation

to be given either to the English or Amharic text the French translation should be accepted as furnishing a solution of the matter under dispute.

In recording this assurance I have, &c.,

(Signed) RENNELL RODD.

(TRADUCTION)

ADIS-ABBABA *le Mai* 14, 1897.

VOTRE MAJESTÉ,

J'ai l'honneur d'accuser réception de la lettre de votre Majesté in envoyant la traduction Française du Traité qui sera signé entre nous aujourd'hui en Englais et en Amharique et j'accepte, au nom de mon Gouvernment, la proposition de votre Majesté, que dans le cas où il y aura à l'avenir divergence d'opinion sur l'interprétation correcte à donner ou an texte Anglais ou an texte Amharique, la version Française qui a été adoptee de part et d'autre comme suffisante sera accepté comme interprétant la matiere en dispute.

En donnant cette assurance à votre Majesté j'ai &c.

(signé) RENNELL RODD.

ANNEX III

Mr RODD to RAS MAKINNAN

HARRAR, *June* 4, 1897 (28 *Genbot* 1889).

Peace be unto you.

After friendly discussion with your Excellency I have understood that His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia will recognise as frontier of the British protectorate on the Somali Coast the line which starting from the Sea at the point fixed in the Agreement between Great Britain and France on the 9th February 1888, opposite the wells of Hadou, follows the caravan road, described in that agreement, through Abbasouen till it reaches the hill of Somadon. From this point on the road the line is traced by the Saw mountains and the hill of Egu to Moga Medir ; from Moga Medir it is traced by Eylinta Kaddo to Arran Arrhe, near the intersection of latitude 44° east of Greenwich with longitude 9° north. From this point a straight line is drawn to the intersection of 47° east of Greenwich with 8° north. From here the line will follow the frontier laid down in the Anglo-Italian Protocol of the 5th May 1894, until it reaches the sea.

The tribes occupying either side of the line shall have the right to use the grazing grounds on the other side, but during their migrations it is understood that they shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the territorial authority. Free access to the nearest wells is equally reserved to the tribes occupying either side of the line.

This understanding in accordance with Article II. of the Treaty signed on the 14th May 1897 (7th Genbot 1889) by His Majesty the Emperor Menelek and Mr Rennell Rodd at Adis-Abbaba must be approved by the two High Contracting Parties.—I have, &c.

(Signed) RENNELL RODD.

(TRADUCTION)

HARRAR, *le* 4 *Juni* 1897 (28 *Genbot* 1889).

(Salut).

Après discussion amicale avec votre Excellence j'ai comprisque sa Majesté l'Empereur d'Ethiopie reconnaîtra comme frontière du Protectorat Britannique sur la côte des Somalis la ligne qui parlant de la

mer à l'endroit fixé par l'accord entre la Grande Bretagne et la France en Février 1888, vis-à-vis les puits d'Hadou, suive la route des caravanes, tracé dans cet accord, qui passe par Abbasouen, jusqu'à la colline de Somadou. À partir de ce point sur la route la ligne est tracée par les montagnes de Saw et la colline d'Egu jusqu'à Mogar Medir ; à partir de Moga Medir elle est tracée en ligne droite par Eylinta Kaddo jusqu'à Arran Arrhe près de l'intersection de 44 degrés est de Greenwich et 9 degrés nord. De ce point une ligne droite sera tracée jusqu'à l'intersection de 47 degrés est de Greenwich et 8 degrés nord. À partir d'ici la ligne suivra le tracé de la frontière indiqué par le Protocole Anglo-Italien du 5 Mai 1894, jusqu'à la mer.

Les tribus habitant chaque côté de la ligne auront le droit de fréquenter les pâturages d'un côté ainsi que de l'autre, mais il est entendu que pendant leur migrations ils seront soumises à la juridiction de l'autorité territoriale. Un acces libre aux puits les plus proches est réservé également aux habitants de chaque côté de la ligne.

Cet accord conformément a l'Article II. du Traité signé le 14 Mai 1897 (7 Genbot 1889) par sa Majesté L'Empereur Ménélek et Mr Rennell Rodd à Adis-Abbaba doit être approuvé par les deux Hautes Parties Contractantes.—J'ai &c.,

(Signé) RENNELL RODD.

Ras MAKUNAN to Mr RODD

(TRANSLATION)

Sent from Ras Makunan, Governor of Harrar and its dependencies. May this reach the Honourable Mr Rennell Rodd, Envoy of the British Kingdom.

I inform you to-day that after long friendly discussion, the boundary of the British Somali Protectorate upon which we have agreed is as follows :—

Starting from the sea-shore opposite the wells of Hadou (as on which the French and the English Governments agreed in February 1888) it follows the caravan road to Abbassouen till Mount Samadou ; from Mount Samadou to Mount Saw, from Mount Saw to Mount Egu, from Mount Egu to Moga Medir ; starting from Moga Medir, it goes in a direct line to Eylinta Kaddo and Arran Arrhe on 44° east of Greenwich, and 9° north, and again in a direct line until 47° east and 8° north. After this the boundary follows the line on which the English and the Italians agreed on the 5th May 1894, until the sea.

The subjects of both the Contracting Parties are at liberty to cross their frontiers and graze their cattle ; but these people, in every place where they go, must obey the governor of the country in which they are, and the wells which are in the neighbourhood shall remain open for the two parties.

These two letters on which we have agreed, according to Article II. of the Treaty of His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia and Mr Rennell Rodd of the 7th Genbot 1889, 14th May 1897, the two sovereigns having seen them, if they approve them, shall be sealed again (ratified).

Written at Harar, the 28th Genbot 1889, 4th June 1897.

(Signed) Ras MAKUNAN.

Mr Rodd to the Emperor Menelek II.

Cairo, *August 30th*, 1897.

From Mr Rennell Rodd, Special Envoy of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, to His Majesty Menelek II. by the Grace of God, King of Kings of Ethiopia.

Peace be unto your Majesty.

I have the honour to announce that the Queen, my gracious Sovereign, has been pleased to approve and ratify the Treaty which I had the honour to sign with your Majesty on the 14th May last.

Her Majesty has also been pleased to approve of the arrangement which, in accordance with the terms of Article II. of the Treaty, was agreed upon between Ras Makunan, as Representative of your Majesty, and myself, by exchange of notes relative to the frontier of the British Protectorate in the Somali Coast; and it is presumed by Her Majesty's Government that your Majesty has also approved of it, as they have received no notification to the contrary.

The notes exchanged have accordingly been annexed to the Treaty which has received ratification, signifying Her Majesty's approval of all these documents.

I have now the honour to return herewith the copy of the Treaty intrusted to me by your Majesty with its ratification in due form.

When I shall have received from your Majesty a letter signifying that this Treaty, thus ratified and approved, has come safely to your Majesty's hands, it will be made public by the Government of the Queen that all her subjects may observe it and abide by it, and that it may strengthen the ties of friendship between our countries, and increase the feelings of esteem and good-will towards your Majesty, which the reception of the British Mission in Ethiopia has awakened in my country.

I pray that your Majesty's life and health may long be preserved, and that your people may have peace and prosperity.

(Signed) Rennell Rodd.

The Emperor Menelek to the Queen

(Translation)

Menelek II. Elect of God, King of Kings of Ethiopia, to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India, Upholder and Keeper of the Christian religion.

May Peace be unto you.

Your Majesty's letter of the 28th Hamlé (3rd August), and 22nd (23rd) Mascarem (1st) 2nd October 1897, and the Treaty with the Great Seal, dated the 28th Hamlé (3rd August) 1897 have reached me, and we received it with joy. The Treaty of Peace, which is now between your Government and our Government, we hope it will ever increase in firmness and last for ever.

We ask God to give your Majesty health, and to your kingdom quietness and peace.

Written at Adis-Abbaba the 8th December 1897, A.D.

(Seal of His Majesty the Emperor Menelek II.)

APPENDIX V

RAINY DAYS IN ABYSSINIA PER MONTH, FROM APRIL TO DECEMBER 1896

April part	Three	days	Showery	nil	Medium	nil	Heavy	
May	Five	„	„	2	„	„	„	
June	Three	„	„	3	„	5	„	
July	Two	„	„	7	„	19	„	
August	Five	„	„	9	„	12	„	
September	Eight	„	„	5	„	4	„	
October	Eight	„	„	7	„	3	„	
November	Five	„	„	5	„	1	„	
December	Three	„	„	8	„	nil	„	

I give this rough memorandum knowing full well that it is of little or no value, but it was impossible to make any scientific record owing to the want of necessary appliances, so the number of inches of the rainfall cannot be calculated but it must be very heavy. July and August, the height of the rainy season, had twenty-eight and twenty-six days on which it rained respectively, and October, when the rains are supposed to be from all accounts nearly over, there were eighteen. The only place where observations are made is in the Italian colony of Erithrea, and from what can be gleaned from the natives, the fall in central Abyssinia is heavier than in the north as the mountainous region is of larger area and greater altitude this is likely, and the rainfall registered in the Italian colony would give no idea what it is in the south and central parts.

In June 1898 in Shoa it rained on twenty-seven days, in July twenty-six, and in August in the Harar district and on the road to Berberah there were twenty days on which rain fell ; perhaps the two worst days' rain of the season was on the 25th and 26th August, on the table-land prairies between Jigjiga and Arabseo, when many inches must have fallen. As far as my experience of Abyssinia goes there is no exact day for the rains, as they depend on the south-west monsoon ; about the middle of June may be said that the rainy season has commenced, but it may be ten days earlier or a few days after this date. By early September the worst is over, but both September and October some years may be wet months. The spring rains, or what may be called the little monsoon, commence about the middle of April and perhaps last for three weeks, when the weather gets fine again and hot, some years the spring rains entirely fail. Winter rains on the lower slopes of northern Abyssinia are sometimes very heavy, but they also in some years are nearly wanting. I do not think any rule can be laid down with regard to the rains, as there are many exceptions. One rule holds good, that a low Nile in Egypt means a general shortness of rain in Abyssinia over a large area ; but still local districts in the highest altitudes may not suffer, and perhaps just as good crops are grown in the country and just as large an area is cultivated, but there is not the surplus water in the rivers to find its way to Egypt.

APPENDIX VI

LIST OF ANIMALS MET WITH IN ABYSSINIA AND ON THE BORDERS

LION (*Felis leo*). Abyssinia, Erithrea and the borders. Now scarcer than formerly owing to the inhabitants of the country being armed with breech-loaders. Extinct in Central Abyssinia except in the tropical valleys, when they occasionally occur when they are driven from the low countries by the floods.

LEOPARD (*Felis pardus*). Numerous in many of the uncultivated parts of the country and in the inaccessible cliffs surrounding the valleys of the principal rivers. The black leopard is common, but I believe it to be merely a frequent occurrence of melanism, as from native accounts both the spotted and black are found in the same litter, and it is very seldom that a whole litter of black cubs are found though the mother is of that colour.

SERVAL (*Felis serval*). Not uncommon, and skins may be bought occasionally in the local markets. Found in the neighbourhood of thick jungle, and very destructive to the goats and sheep.

CHEETAH (*Cynœlurus jubatus*). Common in nearly all the uncultivated parts of the high and low lands where the smaller gazelles are plentiful.

CARACAL (*Lyncus caracal*). The long-tailed, with large black ears with black tassels. A specimen in the South Kensington Natural History Museum. Also a thicker and shorter-tailed one with smaller ears and smaller tassels, the colour of the fur being much lighter and brighter.

EGYPTIAN WILD CAT (*Felis maniculata*). The same as met with in Egypt and the Soudan. Most destructive to the poultry, wild guinea-fowl and francolin.

CIVET (*Viverra civetta*). Common in most parts and kept in captivity for its musk, which is largely used and exported.

GENET (*Genetta Tigrina*). Both the blotched and pale genet are common.

ICHNEUMON AND MUNGOOSE (*Herpestes*). There are several distinct kinds of this family. They vary in size from the large Egyptian mungoose to a dark brown one the size of a small English ferret.

ZORILLE (*Ictidonyx Libicus*). The Egyptian kind is rarer than the Ictidonyx zorilla or South African kind, which is common up to about 6000 feet altitude.

WEASELS (*Mustelidæ*). There are representatives of this species, but they are hard to procure and difficult to observe, owing to their nocturnal habits and the rocky country covered with a thick undergrowth of vegetation in which they pass the day.

HYŒNA (*Hyœna striata and Hyœna crocuta*) are both common. There are many of these animals with very irregular marked skins, very like a cross between H.S. and H.C. They are found throughout the whole of Abyssinia and at the highest elevations, so that they must be perfectly hardy.

FOX (*Vulpes pallida*). The Egyptian fox is found in the low country. In the highlands there is another fox very similar to the English

one, and a rarer one very dark, nearly black, which I have seen on three occasions. Melanism may account for the colour.

FENNEC (*Vulpes Zeroa*) which is exactly the same as the common Fennec found in Egypt and Nubia.

AARD WOLF (*Proteles cristatus*). Common in the low lands and foot hills where white ants abound.

HUNTING DOG (*Lycaon pictus*). A rare animal, never numerous, but sometimes found in the uninhabited prairies.

JACKAL (*Canis aureus and Canis mesomelas*). The common and black-backed jackals are both very numerous throughout the high and low lands, and do great damage to the flocks of sheep and goats, which are easier captured than the oribi, duiker, and other small antelopes. There is a variegated coloured jackal which may be a cross between C.A. and C.M.

ABYSSINIAN OTTER. It may be (*Lutra Capensis*) of South Africa, but the one found in Abyssinia seems to be larger and darker than that of the south. It inhabits all the rivers and small lakes that abound in fish. Where otters are numerous, crocodiles are very scarce or do not exist. The cry of the otter at night time is attributed by some Abyssinians to evil spirits, or to the ghosts of men who have been drowned in crossing the rivers when in flood.

RATEL (*Mellivora Ratel*). Common in many parts of Abyssinia and in the low country. The natives place their bee-hives in trees, or fastened to the inside walls of the houses, to prevent the ratel from obtaining the honey. This animal is a fair climber on rough surfaces, but unable to climb smooth trees. The skin of the ratel's back makes the best and toughest sandals.

PORCUPINE (*Hystrix cristata*). Common in many parts of Abyssinia, but not at any great altitude or in the very cold country.

AARD VARK (*Oryctéropris Capensis*). Its footprints very often met with in the lower countries, but seldom seen owing to its nocturnal habits.

HEDGEHOG (*Erenaceus auritus*). The long-eared hedgehog very often met with in the high and low lands. Easily domesticated and most useful, killing large quantities of scorpions, centipedes, white ants, small snakes, etc.

HARE (*Lepus Aegyptius*). Common in the low countries facing the north, west and east; in the highlands its place is taken by a larger species (*Lepus Abyssinicus*). This animal is not eaten by the Abyssinians, who regard it as unclean. During the rinderpest that raged over the greater portion of Africa, an epidemic disease attacked both L.Æ. and L.A., and great numbers perished, and they are now very scarce and cannot be relied on as an addition to the pot.

HYRAX (*Hyrax Abyssinicus*) is common wherever there are cliffs and rocks. There are at least five different kinds found in the country. The Shoan the largest of all, two others are likely H. Capensis and the Syrian Hyrax, and a small spiny one of a light brown colour. *N.B.*—There are in Abyssinia spiny varieties of the hyrax, squirrel, rat, mouse, shrew and jerbille.

SQIRREL (*Sciurus* ——). The squirrels of Abyssinia are very numerous, and can be divided into the ground, rock and tree squirrels inhabiting

both the high and low countries. The ground species are first met with, and are found all round the borders along the high roads. There are three distinct kinds, one a spiny one. The rock squirrels, of which I have observed two, are larger than the ground species; and there are three distinct sorts of tree squirrels, varying in size from that of the common English squirrel to one of three times its size, with a beautifully marked black, chestnut and light brown fur.

RAT AND MOUSE (*Mus* ——). Many varieties of rats and mice abound both in the highlands and lowlands. The brown or Norwegian rat is met with in the larger Northern towns, but it is not so common as in most countries, or as the black rat which is very common. The Abyssinian rats are more of the jerbille order. A light brown rat with a spiny back is common. Mice are numerous and of varied descriptions; the light brown field mouse with yellow bands and spots being often met with. It varies somewhat from the Barbary mouse.

GERBOA (*Dipus Aegyptius*). Common in the low countries.

JERBILLE. The same as found in the Soudan. Both the rat and mouse sizes being very numerous, also a spiny one of each sort. So common in the agricultural districts as frequently to become a pest, and the most destructive of all the rodents.

SHREW. The shrew mouse is found in damp places, and of three descriptions: A large one and a very small one, and a bristly or spiny shrew of a medium size.

MOLE (*Talpa*). Very common in the highlands and in the water meadows of Central Abyssinia.

BATS. Many of the smaller sorts are common, both long and short-eared, they are all of the insect eating order, and inhabit the roofs of the churches and other large buildings.

MONKEYS

GUEREZA (*Colobus Guereza*). Common in all the forests of southern Abyssinia. A fruit and insect-eating animal, and living specimens very hard to obtain. Long silky black and white fur, which is greatly sought after for making capes. A large black guereza is found in the forests of Waag and Lasta, but is very rare. It lives in the coldest and highest part of the country, and should be a very hardy animal and not require being kept in a temperature suited to tropical monkeys.

GELADA (*Theropithecus gelada*). The commonest of all the monkeys south of the Tacazze river. The old males grow to a very large size and have big black-brown manes; the young are often kept in captivity and make amusing and intelligent pets. They are found in the colder portions of the Wollo and Shoan countries and may be called a temperate climate animal. They generally live in very large troops and do a great deal of mischief in the grain fields unless they are driven away; after the harvest is over it is an interesting sight to see them gleaning, as they often work in lines, and at some distance might be mistaken for human beings. They always post sentries to prevent them being surprised by leopards which often capture the young ones, the older ones generally get away up some big sycamore fig-tree or up the nearly perpendicular cliffs where the leopard cannot follow. Their sleeping places are always on the cliff sides which they

do not leave till the sun is up. From the altitude in which it lives it is very hardy.

THOTH BABOON (*Papio thoth*), or papion or dog-faced baboon, takes the place of the gelada in northern Abyssinia and on the foot hills round the frontier. This is equally destructive to the crops, often destroying large fields of dhurra or holcus sorghum before the grain is ripe, as it is very fond of the sweet stalks. The male papion is larger than the male gelada and has a much bigger mane, and his hind parts are not so well covered, he is an uglier animal in every respect. The female papion has not the bare pinkish breasts of the female gelada, and it is curious the difference between the sexes of the two species, that the male of one kind and the female of the other should be better looking than in the other species. The habitat of the two species is much the same, and their great enemy is the leopard. They seem to be greatly frightened of any adult human being when armed merely with a stick and they will always leave the grain fields when they approach, but they are not so frightened of children and will often show a bold front to them. I have never heard of their doing any mischief either to women or children in Abyssinia, and the tales of their ferocity are travellers' yarns.

GUENON (*Cercopithecus sabæus*) or the grivet guenon is perhaps the commonest of the species of guenons represented in Abyssinia. After the grivet comes the larger green guenon and the lesser, which are two distinct species there can be no doubt, as the lesser is frequently seen in the lower tropical countries and is not half the size of the green. Further to the west the red kind is found, and skins of a pure white one are also found, and live specimens have also reached the coast, and I believe they have lived as far as southern Europe. These monkeys range over a fairly high altitude, and are found up as high as 9000 feet down to the tropical forests. They make most amusing and affectionate pets and are quite harmless, living on the wild fruit and insects—locusts, grasshoppers, flying ants and grubs of all sorts being their favourite food.

ANTELOPE

KUDOO (*Strepsiceros Kudu*). The large kudoo is still found in all the forests and uninhabited valleys of Abyssinia, from the north to the south, but in ever-decreasing numbers. In the centre of the country it will shortly become extinct, and before Abyssinia can become civilised enough to have game laws, this and many other of the large species of antelope will cease to exist. All the bovine antelopes suffered greatly during the epidemic of rinderpest which lasted so many years, and was still going on in a milder form in 1898.

LESSER KUDOO (*Strepsiceros imberbis*). Found on the southern and eastern slopes of Abyssinia but never in great numbers, and not nearly so frequently met with as S.K.

BEISA (*Oryx gazella*) and (*Oryx beisa*). The two kinds are known by the Arab-speaking hunters as the beisa. The common one in the north is the oryx gazella or gemsbuck, and the oryx beisa is also found there, and throughout Somaliland. Getting scarcer in the north, but still common on the lower prairies of the south, and in the Danakil country.

ORYX LEUCORYX. Still to be met with in the north of Abyssinia and the Danakil country, but very rare in both places to what it used to be a few years ago.

ROAN ANTELOPE (*Hippotragus equinus*). Plentiful in the north-west and east up till the rinderpest broke out, now reported as very scarce.

DEFASSA (*Cobus defassa*). Found in the Bogos country, Ainseba and Barca rivers. The southern representative is (*Cobus ellipsiprymnus*) which is found in the uninhabited valleys that drain into the Blue Nile and Tacazze rivers.

TORA (*Bubalis tora*). The common hartebeest of the north and Bogos land. In the south the hartebeest is represented by two specimens, Bubalis Swaynei and a much darker coloured one found round Jigjiga and in the upper highland praries.

GERENHUK (*Lithocranius Walleri*). Inhabits the south, south-eastern and eastern borders. One of the most peculiar looking animals of the antelope tribe, with its long camel-like neck and long thin legs. When trotting, and with neck outstretched, it has the appearance of a dromedary. The Somalis and Abyssinian Mahomedans will not eat the meat of this animal, owing to a peculiarity in the females. They are not hunted, and are therefore more numerous than any other of the antelopes, and are bolder and easier to approach. I have often watched them, and they are most interesting animals to look at.

(*Ammodorcas Clarkei*), or Clarke's gazelle, found on the lower slopes of southern Abyssinia, and on the bush covered uplands. In habits not unlike the gerenhuk, but not nearly so tame. The upland Ammodorcas is darker and rather larger than the lowland one, but may only be a variety.

(*Gazella Sommeringi*), commonly but wrongly called the Ariel, is perhaps more frequently met with than any other of the gazelles, and is often found in vast herds. It hardly ever is found above an altitude of 4000 feet. I have seen it in the north of Abyssinia feeding with the flocks and herds belonging to the natives. It is easily tamed and breeds in captivity, but the old males sometimes get very vicious with strangers, and they are more than a match for a good-sized dog or jackal.

GAZELLE (*Gazella Dorcas*), (*Gazella Arabica*). The gazelle is found over a larger area of country than any of the other species, and slight varieties of this animal have been given different names, whereas the difference may be attributed to an adaptation of its external colouring, to the conditions of the life it leads, and the vicinity in which it is found. It is common all round the frontier, and is found up to about the same elevation as Gazella Sommeringi. I have shot G.D. and G.A. from Egypt to well inside the borders of Abyssinia along the western shores of the Red Sea and from Yembo to near Aden on the eastern side, and on many of the uninhabited islands of the Red Sea, and the one with the dark band along the side will be found with the one without the dark band. There is not the marked difference between G.D. and G.A. as there is between (*Dorcatragus Melagotis*), the hill gazelle of Somaliland and the borders of Abyssinia, and (*Gazella Pelzelni*) the lowland gazelle, which is not found in Abyssinia.

KLIPSPRINGER (*Orestragus saltator*). This pretty little animal is found throughout the whole of Abyssinia and is common among the cliffs and rocks near the largest towns. Its flesh is delicious, perhaps the best of all the small antelopes ; it is perfectly hardy and should do well in England if turned out. It is found upon the highest elevations, and in Waag and Lasta it was common at an elevation ot over 10,000 feet.

STEINBOK (*Paphiceros campestris*). This is the only representative of the steinboks in Abyssinia, common in the Harar province and in Gallaland.

DUIKER (*Cephalophus Abyssinicus*), is common throughout the whole of Abyssinia, more especially in the north ; in the south, besides C.A., a larger duiker is found which seems to me to be exactly the same as Cephalophus Grimmi of Nyassaland. This latter is very common round the town of Harar, and comes at night time to within a few hundred yards of the walls of the town to feed on the khat plantations. The flesh of the duiker is much liked by the Abyssinians.

ORIBI (*Ourebi or Oribia Abyssinicus*). This is also very common in all the thick scrub near the villages, and is found both in the north and south. Does a good deal of damage to the young crops and also to the young khat trees. There are three species : O.A., Oribia Hastata the same as is found in Nyassaland, and a much smaller one than O.A. which is found both in the north and south. O.H. is a southern animal, and not found anywhere in the north.

DIK-DIK (*Madoqua saltiana*). The smallest of the Abyssinian antelopes, very common in the low countries and foot hills. Good eating and easily killed with small shot. Very difficult to keep in captivity owing to its timidity. On the south and east border the Madoqua Guentheri takes the place greatly of M.S. and becomes the commoner animal, but both are met with together. The dik-dik generally run in pairs, and the natives say they mate for life.

IBEX. This animal is only found in the north, and is the same as the Soudan and Sinai species.

BUFFALO. Reported to be extinct on account of the rinderpest, they were generally met with in the north-west of Abyssinia.

ELEPHANT (*Loxodonta Africana*). Still found but in always diminishing numbers. Walkeit and the northern Danakil country being the places where it is most numerous in the north, Kaffa in the south-west, and during the rains it is sometimes fairly plentiful on the eastern slopes of the mountains from Aschengi to the Hawash valley, and in the Arussi Galla country to the south-east. It sometimes crosses during the rains from the eastern to the western sides of Abyssinia along the banks of the Mareb river ; from eastern Yejju along the Tacazze valley and along the Blue Nile valley. The Harar province yields a few annually, and it is reported as fairly plentiful in the unexplored Danakil country.

HIPPOPOTAMUS (*Hippopótamus amphibius*). Still numerous in all the rivers such as the Mareb, Tacazze and parts of the Blue Nile, and in Lake Tsana, but extinct in all the smaller lakes and rivers that run to the east. The last hippopotamus in the Harar province

was killed some twenty years ago in the Chercher lake in the Chercher province, west of the Cunni province.

GIRAFFE (*Giraffa camelopardalis*). Found to the west of the Walkeit province in the lower country and reported on the eastern slopes of Abyssinia in the Danakil country, the Hawash valley, and to the south of the Arussi country.

ZEBRA. The common zebra and Grevys are found in the southern part of the Danakil country, Hawash valley, and the Arussi country.

WILD ASS. Is also found in the same countries.

CROCODILE. This is found in nearly all the main rivers and their tributaries that flow to the Nile. It is of the same species as that found in the Soudan and Egypt and often attains enormous dimensions. They make up stream during the rains which is their breeding season, when the males engage in savage battles and are then easily approached. They return with the fall of the water and the young are then found in the isolated pools. The rivers that flow towards the Red Sea are free from the crocodile. It is reported, however, to exist in the Hawash river, but the evidence is not trustworthy and from French sources mostly. I have never heard of a native killing or seeing one. The Hawash is full of otters and so is its large tributary the Cassim, and these may have been mistaken for crocodiles.

The game birds of Abyssinia are very numerous and of many kinds, and range down from the ostrich to the European or passage quail which is found in great numbers during the winter. It arrives towards the end of September and leaves again in February. The ostrich is found in the north-west, on the eastern borders of Abyssinia, and in the Hawash valley. The eggs of these birds are used for decorating the points of the crosses which are placed on the apex of the roofs of all churches throughout Abyssinia. The feathers are seldom used. The fat of the bird is employed as a lubricant for rheumatism and for sprains, and when mixed with rosa, citronella and other scented oils, is applied to the hair not only for toilet but for sanitary purposes, and removing the insects with which the head is generally infested. The next largest game bird is the big bustard (*Otis Arabica*), the males grow to a large size, and when fat will weigh a trifle over 30 lbs., they range from 10 lbs. upwards, the hens are much smaller, say from 8 lbs. to 16 lbs. when in good condition. This bustard is found throughout the whole of the country except in the rocky and very broken parts, and is a welcome addition to the commissariat, as its flesh is excellent. There are three different kinds of smaller bustard, one exactly the same as the Indian species, Ruppell's bustard, and a light brown one. There are six kinds of francolins, those found in the lower country giving place to larger birds in the higher altitudes, and in the Waag and Lasta mountains there is a nearly black species, the size of a hen pheasant. Erckel's, Ruppell's and Beke's francolins are the most common. In the south, in the Harar province, there is a small grey francolin which is excellent eating. There may be several more found; I have only noticed the above. Two kinds of partridges are common, the Sinai Arabian partridge, and a handsomer and larger bird which is very difficult to find unless a dog is used. The guinea-fowl is found wherever there is a belt of jungle in the vicinity of cultivation. It is very much the same as the English species only a little darker, and has a peculiar horny head which

is different to the English bird. These birds where they are not much shot at are very tame, and there is no difficulty in making a fair bag of them ; they are excellent table birds when young. There are two sorts of geese, the commoner that is found throughout the country is the same as the Egyptian or Nile goose, the goslings are worth shooting, but the old birds are not worth wasting powder and shot over, as they are very tough. The second kind is only found in the Galla country, and I never met with it north of the Tacazze river ; it is about the same size as the other but of a grey colour with white and black markings, it is also a better table bird. Ducks are very numerous and of many different species. The European kinds are represented by the common teal, the garganey, the shoveller, the golden eye, the tufted duck and the sheldrake. The mallard, pochard and widgeon are not met with. There are many ducks that I have never seen in any other country that must be indigenous to Abyssinia. Two sorts of pochards quite distinct from the European bird, and two kinds of garganey, much larger than the European species, a black duck which when handled is seen to have a plumage the colour of a silver-grey rabbit. Several other diving ducks are also common and all are excellent eating. They are very tame as they are never shot at, as the Abyssinians do not eat them. Duck shooting, owing to the tameness of the birds, can hardly be called sport, they are to be found all the year round near the rivers, lakes, ponds and marshes with which the country abounds. Snipe are found in all the marshy parts of Abyssinia, they breed on the high bleak uplands ; during the rains they scatter greatly, and in the dry season they congregate in the damp places of the upper plateaux where they may be found in hundreds, they are identically the same as the Egyptian bird. The painted snipe is rare but occasionally met with. Plovers of many sorts are met with, sandpipers, stilts, avocets, and many other waders. Grebes of several sorts, water-hens and coots in myriads. Storks, cranes, herons, bitterns, egrets and other marsh birds. There are six distinct species of the Ibis, their discordant cries are one of the familiar sounds of the country. Pigeons and doves of many sorts ; a very large green fruit pigeon getting very fat and is excellent eating. A slate-coloured pigeon with white markings on the head and wings congregates in large flocks at harvest-time after their breeding season, and many can be killed with a single discharge of the gun. The common English turtle dove visits Abyssinia in the winter in countless thousands, and the common cream-coloured ring dove is found throughout the low country.

Eagles of all sorts and sizes abound. Vultures of every kind from the Egyptian upwards to the very largest ; kites, falcons, hawks and harriers, and there is no country where so many species are to be found of this class. It would be impossible in the space at my disposal to enumerate even a small portion of the different families of birds which are found in Abyssinia and on the borders. In about eight months, during the English expedition to Abyssinia along the road to Magdala, two hundred and ninety-nine different birds were collected, and I daresay this hardly represents half of what really exist. A collection of the entire Abyssinian birds would contain perhaps many specimens perfectly new to Natural History. It is not only in the bird line that Abyssinia offers such a vast and interesting field to the naturalist, but for the lesser animals, snakes, lizards, fish, butterflies, moths, beetles, and insects of all sorts which are all so numerously represented. The birds frequently met with to which one's attention is immediately drawn are the hornbills.

The large Abu-Gumba or ground hornbill, with his immense beak, is seen frequently, sometimes singly but oftener in pairs or in flocks numbering about twenty; they are very interesting to watch when hunting for the snakes, beetles, lizards, scorpions, etc., on which they feed, turning over the stones under which their prey usually hide. When the young of the locust in their grasshopper form are about, these birds gorge themselves to such an extent that they have great difficulty in flying. The Secretary bird is often met with, and on several occasions I have seen a pair of them attacking some large snake, dancing round it and one presenting the tip of its outstretched wing for the snake to strike at, while the other dashes in and pecks at the snake's tail. When it commences to get tired, one of the birds will catch hold near the tail and drag it along for a yard or two, and then when it is exhausted will fly several feet up in the air with it and drop it to the ground, with each fall the snake gets feebler, until one of the birds seizes it and carries it up to an elevation perhaps of two hundred feet and lets go, and then descends to the ground by closing its wings nearly as soon as the snake, which is then struck with the beak at the back of the head and killed. These birds seem to kill the snakes for sport, as they kill a great many more than they can eat. There are many sorts of tree hornbills: two are very common, the yellow and scarlet beaked varieties, and are seen daily at the lower elevations. At Axum a pair of the scarlet beaked had their nest in a hollow tree in the garden of the house I inhabited. When I arrived the female had already been plastered up in her nest by the male, who used to feed her daily; before I left the mud had been removed, and the mother and two young ones were perched on a neighbouring branch; the young not fully fledged, and the mother a most disreputable looking object, with ragged plumage and unable to fly; the male was then very busy as he had the three to feed. There are many different kinds of weaver birds, which are most destructive to the grain crops and spoil quantities of dhurra, which they wantonly pick and throw away. They build their hanging bottle-shaped nests close together, and the Abyssinians, when the young birds are just hatched, pile immense heaps of dried grass under the nests and set it on fire, burning the young and many of the females who will not forsake their nests; many of the males escape, and very often in the thickly cultivated parts of the country as many as twenty males may be seen to one female. If these birds were not destroyed they would become a perfect pest to the farmers. The tribe of fly-catchers is very numerously represented, the most beautiful of all being the Paradise fly-catcher, with his long white tail and black crested head; this plumage he has only during the breeding season, at other seasons he is of a chestnut colour. There is another very rare bird of this tribe, which has four long golden feathers in its tail, two that bend upwards and two downwards, it is rather smaller than the Paradise fly-catcher, and marked with yellow, black and brown. The Whidah birds are also common, and there are several sorts of Vidua, the yellow and black and the scarlet and black being the commonest, these are most interesting to watch, especially when a fairly strong wind is blowing, as their long tails seem to be a great trouble to them, and like a lady with a long train often proves unmanageable. These birds are very tame and perch on the long reed grass within a few feet of the road, and keep up a constant musical twittering in spite of the close proximity of the traveller. There is a very rare bird which I believe is also a Vidua, and I have met with it only round Adowa; it is not as big as an English wren. The male

has, during the breeding, an absurdly long tail, which seems to take charge of it entirely when it flies, and when there is the least wind blowing it has the greatest difficulty in progressing. The majority of its colouring is of a grey marked with light brown, black and white. The finch family is also well represented, and their plumage during the breeding season is entirely different to what it is during the rest of the year, an insignificant little brown bird becomes a radiant scarlet, blue or golden gem, and perched on some branch he shows off before his more sober clad mate, who is busy at work, either building her nest or hatching her eggs. There are many different sorts of starlings, the metallic indigo blue kind being most common; and many of the weaver birds such as the scarlet rumped weaver bird of Shoa and the Juida superba are in shape, walk and habits identically the same as our English birds; they have also the same gift of mimicry, and I have often watched them and listened to them copying the notes of other birds, and it would hardly be believed that the same notes proceeded from the one throat. All these birds get absurdly tame, and if food is thrown down to them, they soon get bold enough to approach within a few feet. During a long illness at Adowa, the birds were my constant source of amusement, and I had over twenty kinds that used to visit me morning and evening for food, the common Arabian bul-buls, that are very plentiful in Abyssinia, used to take bits of dates off the palm of my hand. There are several kinds of robins, identical in their habits to the English red-breast, and they build in the thatch of the houses or in holes in the wall. They have a sweet plaintive little song which they often sing about sunset, and on a cold evening with the red glow in the west, which often occurs at a high altitude, the notes might be mistaken for that of their English brother. Swallows, swifts, house and sand martins are all represented, besides the English species which visit Abyssinia in the winter; they also congregate in large flocks in the month of March before they commence their return flight to Europe. Among other winter visitants to the country that are known in England are the wryneck, water-wagtail of three kinds, wheatear, nearly all the chats, red start and several of the warblers. Abyssinia possesses no humming birds, but their place is worthily filled by the nearly equally gorgeous nectarines or sun-birds, which vary in size from a little mite of a bird with a body about twice the size of a bumble-bee to a bird that measures fully six inches long. There are at least a dozen different sorts of these birds, one perhaps more splendid in colouring than the other, and it is a constant source of enjoyment watching them hovering over the flowers and extracting the honey from their centres, and also serving to impregnate the female blooms with the pollen of the male. The delights of a large semi-tropical garden in Abyssinia are endless; it is not only the constant succession according to the seasons of rare and common flowers, many of which are old English favourites, but the myriad representatives of bird and insect life to be watched enables the day to be spent with the greatest enjoyment, and I never found a day too long nor have I regretted one single hour of my life passed in this beautiful country with its glorious climate, studying nature's book which has a binding of splendid scenery to add to its other attractions. There is no good book published on the birds of this part of Africa. Layard's birds of South Africa is useful as there are many birds common to both countries.

APPENDIX VII

A List of some of the Market Towns in Abyssinia with Supplies to be obtained.

Asmara	Saturdays weekly	General produce of the country	Petty European goods and cloth	Cattle of all sorts	Large supplies
Adi Quala	Mondays ,,	do.	do.	Cattle	Medium do.
Adowa	Saturdays ,,	do.	do.	Cattle of all sorts	Large do.
Axum	Fridays ,,	do.	do.	Cattle	Medium do.
Adigrat	Mondays ,,	do.	do.	do.	do. do.
Abbi-Addi	Saturdays ,,	do.	do.	do.	do. do.
Macalle	Mondays ,,	do. (largest salt market in Abyssinia)	do.	Cattle of all sorts	Large do.
Samre	Saturdays ,,	General produce of the country	...	Cattle	Small do.
Socota	Tuesdays and Wednesdays weekly	do.	Petty European goods and cloth	Cattle of all sorts	Very large do.
Dildi	Fridays weekly	do.	...	Cattle	Small do.
Lalibela	Thursdays weekly	do.	...	do.	Medium do.
Gumbora Sanca	Saturdays ,,	do.	...	do.	do. do.
Waldea	Tuesdays ,,	do.	Petty European goods and cloth	Cattle of all sorts	Large do.
Merto	Saturdays ,,	do.	...	Cattle	Medium do.
Grana	Thursdays ,,	do.	Petty European goods and cloth	do.	Large do.
Witchali Michael	Mondays ,,	do.	...	do.	Small do.
Golvo	Mondays ,,	do.	...	do.	do. do.
Boru Meida	Saturdays ,,	do.	Petty European goods and cloth	Cattle of all sorts	Large do.
Woro Eilu	Thursdays ,,	do.	Petty European and native woollen cloth	do.	Very large do.
Nevat	Fridays ,,	do.	...	Cattle	Small do.
Adese-Ababa	Daily except Sundays, Saturdays large	do.	Petty European goods and cloth	Cattle of all sorts	Large do.
Scancora	Fridays weekly	do.	...	Cattle	Small do.
Araki	Saturdays weekly	do.	...	Sheep	do. do.
Buoroma	Supplies have to be ordered, entailing a day's delay	do.	...	do.	do. do.
Harar	Daily except Sundays	do.	Petty European goods and cloth	Sheep of all sorts	Large do.
Fiambcero	Daily frontier market for Somali country towards Bulhar and Berberah	do.	do.	do.	Medium do.
Gildessa	Daily frontier market for Zeilah Road	do.	...	Sheep	Small do.

N.B.—A traveller can always buy sufficient native supplies at one market town to take him on to the next, and thereby be independent of the countrymen; but if one wants to see the country people and get to know them, it is better to camp near their villages and buy from them.

APPENDIX VIII

LIST OF ABYSSINIAN TITLES ACCORDING TO MR WM. SCHIMPER

Negusa Negust	Emperor or Emperor of Kings.
Negus	King.
Ras Betwedet	Minister.
Asage	High Chamberlain.
Ras Turk Basha	General of infantry and soldiers.
Ras (common)	Chief of a country.
Dedjatzmatch	Duke (Dedjatch is the abbreviation of this word).
Asmatch	Commander of Division.
Kenezmatch	Commander of right wing.
Gerazmatch	Commander of left wing.
Fituari	Commander of advance guard.
Barrambaras	Guardian of a frontier.
Belata	Chief of the Staff (a King's Belata is the Ras Betwedet)
Begerund	Is the head of a trade or a State Department.
Sahafei Tizaz	Chief Secretary.
Basha	Head Customs Officer.
Choum	Chief of a district, villages or village. (The two exceptions are the titles of Waag Choum and Choum Agamie, two large provinces.)
Chicka	Minor chief of a village.
Negradas	A merchant or head of a trade.
Negadie	A pedlar or a man that buys and sells, the lowest of all the people of the community, although perhaps the richest; honest work is looked down on at present in the country by the high officials.

The Government of Abyssinia is a despotic monarchy, and the king seldom consults his inferiors except on great national events. There is an appeal from the decision of minor rulers to the king, but in some cases of a grave nature the complainant never reaches the capital. The king does not like, as a rule, to upset the decisions of his minor authorities.

APPENDIX IX

ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVES IN ERITHREA SINCE 1885

Colonel Saletta	January 1885.	
General Gene	„ 1887.	Battle of Dogali, Jan. 1887.
General Saletta	February 1887.	This governor had been in command when colonel.
General San Marsano	April 1888.	
General Baldissera	December 1889.	Took Asmara and Keren in the highlands.
General Orero	January 1890.	Occupied Adowa, and then retired leaving Italian agent.
General Gondolfi	Autumn 1890 to July 1891.	

General Baratieri	July 1891 to March 1896. Victories, Coatit and Senafe, January 1895 ; defeats, Amba Alagi, Macalle, and Adowa.
General Arimondi	Acting during General Baratieri's absence in Italy, gained complete victory over the Dervishes at Agordat, 21st December 1893.
General Baldissera	March 1896 till autumn 1896.
Signor de Martino	Autumn 1896 till present date.

From 1887 till 1896 the constant change of Governor Generals in the Italian colony prevented any peaceful development; they all being military men thought more about annexing new country than making what they had obtained through King Menelek a success. It seems that the policy of annexation favoured by General Baratieri was the great stumbling-block, and his treatment of the Abyssinians was, to say the least, injudicious, especially when he allowed his native troops to plunder Adowa from 29th to 31st December 1894, as from that date the whole of the Abyssinians in the north lost confidence in Italy, and it has been up-hill work for the civilian Governor General Signor de Martino to regain it. Everyone speaks most highly of the present official, and he is making the colony a success, and under his rule there can be no doubt that, if the policy now pursued is continued, Italy will gain the confidence and respect of the Abyssinians, and by making use of their once brave and mobile foe will make further territorial advancement when the time comes. The fault of the military leaders has been ignoring their enemies' capabilities, and trying to accomplish too much with too small a force, and ignoring a more mobile foe that can always concentrate an overwhelming force at any point in the open, and acting on the offensive against them instead of the defensive, and also by employing obsolete artillery against modern quick firing guns.

APPENDIX X

List of some of the Greater Battles fought in Recent Times

Magdala	King Theodore	*versus*	English	English Victory	April 1868
Gundet	Abyssinia	,,	Egyptians	Abyssinian Victory	November 1875
Gura	do.	,,	do.	do.	March 1876.
Kufit	do.	,,	Dervishes	do.	September 1885
Dogali	do.	,,	Italians	do.	January 1887
Gondar	King Tchlaihaimanout	,,	Dervishes	Dervish Victory	Autumn 1887
Wogera	Abyssinia	,,	do.	Abyssinian Victory	August 1888.
Gallabat	do.	,,	do.	do.	March 1889.
Coatit	Ras Mangesha	,,	Italians	Italian Victory	January 1895
Senafe	do.	,,	do.	do.	do. 1895
Amba Alagi	Abyssinians	,,	do.	Abyssinian Victory	December 1895
Macalle	do.	,,	do.	do.	December 1895 / January 1896
Adowa	do.	,,	do.	do.	March 1896

Since the battle of Adowa the country has been at peace.

Battle of Magdala against King Theodore alone and not against the whole of Abyssinia.

Battle of Gondar was only the Godjam troops against the Dervishes.

Gallabat—King Johannes was killed, and the Dervishes never afterwards attacked King Menelek, owing perhaps to some understanding between the two.

Coatit and Senafe—Ras Mangesha had only his Tigréan troops.

Amba Alagi, Macalle and Adowa were against united Abyssinia after King Menelek had received plenty of supplies of arms and ammunition from the French port of Djibuti.

There have been plenty of minor engagements, but the above battles all led to turning points in Abyssinian history. After Magdala the country became united under King Johannes, who defeated the Egyptians. To aid the English he attacked the Dervishes, and then we abandoned him to fight against the Italians, Menelek and the Dervishes. Battle of Dogali cemented the friendship of Italy and Menelek. Battle of Gallabat —death of King Johannes, and Menelek made himself master. Battle of Coatit—Ras Mangesha, pushed by King Menelek to attack the Italians when he found he could get nothing further from them, led to the Italian invasion of Tigré, and then Menelek bringing an enormous army to drive them back over the frontier, he had arranged with them for their help for aiding him to be King of Abyssinia.

Battle of Adowa—defeat of the Italians and making King Menelek the strongest native potentate in Africa, leading to French intrigues and trying to make him aid them in their attempt to make a French zone across Africa, from the French Congo to their port of Djibuti.

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FROM MASSAWAH TO ZEILAH
Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30 40 60
Market Towns
Passes
TIGRE
AMHARA
SHOA
WOLLO GALLA
GOJJAM
LASTA
YEJJU
ARABIA
GULF OF ADEN
SOMALI COAST
(French)
SOMALILAND
PROTECTORATE
(British)
Massawah
Arkeeko
Dubbuk
Ras Dumeira
Ras Endada
Hagdila Bay
Ras Kussar
Jebel Zugur
Harnish
Mocha
Perim
Gubbet el Kibleh
Gulf of Tajurra
Zeilah
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